
Worcester United

Worcester and surrounding stakeholders (parents, grandparents, caregivers) organized to defend public education. The primary purpose of this group is to support all students by ensuring an inclusive school environment.

February 21, 2024

LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY - SB738

Submitted on behalf of Worcester United

To the Honorable Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

The 800 members of Worcester United are asking for your support of the Freedom to Read Act (HB785/SB738). The Freedom to Read Act ensures access for our group's most valuable asset, the students of Worcester County. Intellectual freedom is an inherent right established in our society and extends to all people, regardless of age. Any attempt to erode this freedom inhibits our students from being competitive in a global society.

As parents and community members from a rural conservative district, we see the need to protect access to ideas in all libraries. After three years of repeated attempts to censor materials in our school and public libraries, Worcester United is hopeful that the Freedom to Read Act will secure the access that our students need.

These bills will codify Maryland's commitment to *open and inclusive access* to library materials as well as requiring all libraries to have in place policies as to how they go about selection and maintenance of their collections. It will further *hold our librarians to policies and procedures* outlined for them to follow.

These bills will protect our school and public librarians who have the best interest of the communities they serve at the heart of everything they do.

Worcester County Public Schools already have policies and procedures in place to limit access to certain materials if directed to do so by parents/guardians. This information has been shared publicly and vetted so those that need the information have it at their fingertips. These policies and procedures should be protected.

The safety and well-being of ALL students is at the heart of what we do and we respectfully request you will support the passage of the Freedom to Read Act and keep intellectual curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking at the heart of teaching and learning in Worcester County and all of Maryland.

Sincerely,

Worcester United

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/worcesterunited>