

A free people rule through a government of informed consent, never a simple process, and requiring a broad range of public institutions. We need a free press to circulate information, ideas and opinions. We need an educated public to be able to read the current press, and to read the ideas, opinions and judgments of valued thinkers from the past. We need libraries to make such information available to all citizens. We need to keep the press and the libraries protected from censorship by those in power.

Our founders spent a lot of effort to protect us from the tyranny of the Majority, and our forefathers struggled over decades to build the thousands of independent institutions that serve to protect us against the short-term accrual of majority power that can create that tyranny.

Independent libraries are one of those institutions. Libraries' independence is enhanced by creating trusteeships which governed the library in the public interest, elected independent of local political control.

We have seen many regimes try to assert control of libraries to restrict what information is available to the public, generally through narrow ideological banning of books.

Please note that one of the sponsors of this bill attempted to be elected as a Library Trustee and was rejected by the electorate of Goffstown. This bill smacks of vindictiveness and an attempt to overthrow that election by other means. The bill also calls for its implementation in 60 days, presumably to avoid time for appeals and considerations.

Please keep local public libraries in the hands of elected Trustees who believe in the important role that libraries play in the fabric of public life, and out of the political cauldron. Keep them safe from local tyrants.