

I am writing in opposition to HB 1214. I have served as a library trustee for 20 years. Giving towns the opportunity to take operational control of their public will not benefit libraries. Instead, it will open them up to have their budgets cut, their programming controlled, possibly even their collections censored. NH has a strong tradition of independent libraries that are not subject to the whims and control of a town board; public libraries are intentionally governed by independent boards of trustees because democracy depends on equal access to information that is free from direct government oversight.

Librarians can indeed sometimes be overwhelmed, but they are trained professionals who know how to work with their staff, manage library operations and serve their community. Library trustees are knowledgeable, locally elected or appointed volunteers who are deeply invested in their communities and directly accountable to the public they serve. Their role is to safeguard intellectual freedom, ensure responsible stewardship of public and donated funds, and establish policies that prioritize community needs while providing stability and continuity beyond shifting political priorities.

I urge the committee to vote HB1214 as ITL.