

Talking points in opposition to HB 1214.

Governance of libraries is best left in the hands of library trustees who have a vested interest in the mission of our town libraries.

Governance of the library should be independent of the Select Board in order to ensure freedom of information to all citizens.

It is essential that libraries be independent so that they can operate free of prejudice and any agenda by a governmental agency. Trustees understand the laws governing libraries and the rights of patrons and have obligated themselves to defend those freedoms.

The trustees work solely with the library. The Select Board runs the entire town. The trustees work with the Select Board in matters concerning the library. There is NO need for the Select Board to be in charge of it. It is a transfer of responsibility that has no merit or justification.

We have very capable selectmen, but they have many other responsibilities that would keep them from focusing on the needs of the library.

The independence of public libraries from influence by political entities is essential to their functioning sources of free and unbiased services to their communities.

NH has a tradition of independent libraries that are not subject to the whims and control of a town board. Selectmen have a different agenda, and a different set of responsibilities, I believe it's important to have independent leadership that is focused exclusively on the libraries.

The library would not get the attention to detail needed if it were run by the selectmen.

Selectmen focus on a wide variety of issues and cannot be expected to devote time and energy to understanding the needs of the library's patrons.

This bill puts too much power in the hands of people who may or may not have the best interests of the library in mind. It leaves the library very vulnerable to changing political whims. Such a situation might well result in diminishing or even destroying an invaluable, irreplaceable public resource.

Libraries are the cornerstone of freedom in America and MUST be preserved. Libraries must remain autonomous.

One of the purposes of a library trustee board is to remove town politics from the library operation and funding. This bill places the library on par with all other town services. This effort seems to be another example of how our representatives do not understand libraries and their unique position in the community and are attempting to make a change that is not welcome or justified.

Select Boards should be encouraged to work with library trustees rather than being given the additional responsibility.

This is a bill that attempts to solve a problem that doesn't exist. The existing law works fine and there is no reason to change it.

What purpose would the trustees then serve? An advisory board has no or little authority.

Libraries are DIRECTLY governed by the elected board of trustees. These trustees oversee ONLY the library which makes them better able to handle the workings and financial responsibilities of the library. Selectmen have many other duties and financial responsibilities to effectively and accurately handle the governance in the best interest of the library.

The trustees are the advocates for the libraries. They have the best interests of the patrons and the town and the employees of the library, and they are knowledgeable in library matters.

Libraries are independent of town government and should stay that way to ensure there is no partisanship involved in the information gathering or disseminating process. The freedom to read and the freedom of speech are too important to lose.

The library is an institution created and maintained to fulfill the needs of the community at large. Passage of this bill risks the disruption or even destruction of library services by politicizing the library's very existence. Ample evidence shows that a quality library contributes far more to a community than it spends, and that availability and use of libraries is solidly linked to success in schoolchildren and education of citizens. These are not achievements that should be risked.

Town officials are appointed/elected for the purpose of managing town government. Library trustees are appointed/elected for the purpose of library stewardship. These are two different goals requiring different skill sets.

Library trustees are elected to govern all aspects of library activity, financial and otherwise. To take this responsibility out of the hands of the library trustees and into the hands of the Select Board would add unnecessary bureaucracy, and also give decision making power to people who may not have the best interests of the library or the library's mission.

The separation that currently exists between the library and the government provides the independence that the library requires to full fill its mission. The public relies on the library for free access to a wide variety of materials in order to become informed members of a democracy. If the library is under the jurisdiction of the government/Select Board, then the government is able to control the materials that are available to the public. The government could then limit the public's access to materials that contain information that is contrary to the government's policies.

Libraries are anchor institutions in NH towns that, by the current RSA, are more removed from the political whims of the day by having a separate elected board of library trustees for governance. This bill seems to stem from the desire to centralize control of all town funds through select boards. Given the intrinsic need for libraries in our communities to promote literacy, provide information resources for an educated public, and to serve as community centers in towns without a physical town center, this bill needs to be defeated so that NH libraries can continue to focus on the core missions listed above without the fear that the governance of libraries could at any time become bogged down with agendas from elected officials who lack a desire to understand why libraries have been valued in this country for years.

Library trustees manage their libraries with passion and dedication not obvious to the average citizen. Giving already overburdened selectmen the additional responsibility of overseeing the operation of the library would likely result in less responsive, consumer oriented library operations.