

January 2026

Position Statement Regarding HB 1214

The New Hampshire Library Trustees Association (NHLTA) strongly opposes HB 1214, which would allow a municipality to assume governance of a public library. 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.

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.

Allowing municipal takeover of library governance undermines this independence and risks politicizing library operations, collections, and services that are intended to serve the entire community equitably. HB 1214 weakens a proven governance model and threatens the stability, neutrality, and public trust upon which New Hampshire libraries rely.

The NHLTA urges legislators to reject HB 1214 and preserve the independence of public library governance.