

Arlene Gregersen  
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February 17, 2024

To Whom it May Concern,

As the parent of a high school student in Colorado and two college students, as well as an elementary school teacher, I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB25-1158, a bill that I believe would significantly hinder students' access to critical digital resources, which are essential for developing their information literacy skills and conducting research. The potential impact of this legislation on education is deeply concerning, and I urge you to reject the bill in its current form.

### **Impact on Information Literacy and Research Skills**

Online databases and newspapers are vital tools in teaching students how to write research papers, analyze sources, and construct evidence-based arguments. By imposing overly restrictive content limitations on curated digital research collections, HB25-1158 would force schools to remove these essential educational resources, leaving students with fewer tools to develop critical literacy skills. The bill would deprive students of the opportunity to access the breadth of information necessary for academic success and hinder their ability to become informed, critical thinkers.

### **Impact on Public Library and Public School Partnerships**

Public libraries play a crucial role in partnering with school districts to provide access to digital education materials at no cost, ensuring equitable access to valuable research tools for all students. The bill's requirement that public schools must report agreements with public libraries and provide annual notifications about these partnerships adds unnecessary administrative burdens. This provision could discourage schools from collaborating with libraries, ultimately limiting students' access to essential research materials and reducing the ability of public libraries to support K-12 education effectively.

### **Call for a Better Approach**

Rather than imposing restrictions on access to vital digital resources, I urge you to support efforts that focus on enhancing students' ability to navigate and critically assess online information. Removing valuable databases and newspapers from school collections because of embedded links or minor promotional content is an unnecessary and harmful limitation. This action would ultimately deprive students of the educational opportunities they need to succeed in the digital age.

We need policies that promote, rather than hinder, access to reliable and comprehensive research materials in our public schools. I strongly urge you to reject HB25-1158 and work toward policies that better support our students' educational needs.

Thank you for your time and attention to this critical issue. I look forward to your response and hope you will consider the long-term consequences of this legislation on our students' academic success.

Sincerely,

Arlene Gregersen

**House Education**

**02/20/2025 01:30 PM**

**HB25-1158 Digital Education Materials**

**Typed Text of Testimony Submitted**

<b>Name, Position, Representing</b>	<b>Typed Text of Testimony</b>
Peder Hansen Against themselves	<p>As a career public school teacher , and current teacher librarian, I oppose HB25-1158, as it would significantly hinder students' access to critical digital resources essential for developing their information literacy skills and conducting research. By imposing overly restrictive content limitations on curated digital research collections, this legislation threatens to deprive students of the essential tools they need to succeed academically and become informed, critical thinkers.</p> <p>Online databases and newspapers are fundamental to teaching students how to write research papers, analyze sources, and construct evidence-based arguments. Many high-quality academic and journalistic sources include embedded links, advertisements, and promotions as standard digital features that provide valuable context and further exploration of topics. Prohibiting these elements would force schools to remove essential educational resources, leaving students with fewer tools to develop critical literacy skills.</p> <p>The bill places an unreasonable burden on digital resource providers, requiring them to remove specified content within three days of notification or face contract termination. This demand disregards the technical and contractual realities of content management, where embedded links and promotions are often integral to digital platforms and cannot be selectively removed without compromising the integrity of the resource. The three-day response mandate is not a feasible time frame for vendors managing vast collections of content.</p> <p>Resources Requiring vendors to certify that collections are free of advertisements, promotions, or embedded links will likely result in fewer vendors willing to contract with public schools, effectively cutting students off from databases that contain reputable academic journals, historical archives, and primary sources. This restriction will</p>

	<p>disproportionately impact students in underfunded schools who rely on digital resources for access to high-quality research materials.</p> <p>Public libraries frequently partner with school districts to provide access to digital education materials at no cost for schools, ensuring equitable access to valuable research tools. The bill’s requirement that public schools must report agreements with public libraries and provide annual notifications about these partnerships adds an unnecessary administrative burden that could discourage schools from collaborating with libraries. This would ultimately limit students’ access to essential research materials and reduce the effectiveness of public libraries in supporting K-12 education. This would hit my school and district particularly hard because we rely on these public/school library partnerships for databases and resources that we heavily utilize and cannot otherwise afford.</p> <p>I urge lawmakers to reject this bill in its current form. Instead of restricting access to vital digital resources, efforts should focus on enhancing students’ ability to navigate online information critically. Removing databases and newspapers from school collections due to embedded links or minor promotional content is an unnecessary and harmful limitation that ultimately deprives students of the educational opportunities they need to succeed in the digital age. We advocate for policies that promote, rather than hinder, access to reliable and comprehensive research materials in our public schools.</p> <p>Thank you,</p>
<p>Jennifer Qualteri For themselves</p>	<p>Our kids deserve to be educated, not exploited. That’s why I’m fighting for HB25-1158: Digital Education Materials —a commonsense bill that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Bans harmful advertising in school resources.</li> <li>✔ Holds vendors accountable for content in digital tools.</li> <li>✔ Protects teachers and schools from liability.</li> </ul>

	<p>✓ Ensures taxpayers aren't funding this exploitation.</p>
<p>Steve McKenna For themselves</p>	<p>Please vote yes on HB25-1158. This common sense, bipartisan, bill will protect school children from exploitation for profit. Thank you.</p>
<p>Harry Colehower For themselves</p>	<p>I support this bill to help ensure inappropriate material is excluded.</p>
<p>Elisheba Fay Against themselves</p>	<p>I'm writing to oppose HB 25-1158 which will inappropriately reduce student access to legitimate research materials. Instead of reducing access to a variety of materials, what students need is specific education on evaluating and thinking critically about these materials. Critical thinking and evaluation of claims is especially important in advertising, and removing advertising within the school/research context will not substantially limit or change the overall impact on students. Instead of banning these important sources, empower teachers to use them in education and thus empower students with ability to critically think about their world.</p>
<p>Chelsea Kueht Against themselves</p>	<p>My name is Chelsea Kueht and I'm writing in opposition of HB25-1158 and urging you to not pass this bill. I'm a Library Services Coordinator and am representing myself.</p> <p>HB25-1158 fails to clearly define what an advertisement is, which then could be applied to anything with a logo on it. It would censor any product that contains magazines, newspapers or website links. This would make it nearly impossible for students in schools all across Colorado to access these legitimate products and services that are essential for developing their information literacy skills and conducting research. Information literacy skills are vital for students in this digital age.</p> <p>Online databases and newspapers are fundamental to teaching students how to write research papers, analyze sources and construct</p>

evidence-based arguments. High-quality academic journals and databases include embedded links, advertisements and promotions as standard digital features to provide valuable context and further exploration of topics. Restricting these elements would require schools to remove essential educational resources and leave students with limited tools to develop critical literacy skills. Students in many school districts have access to several online databases, including Gale and Britannica, that contain embedded links to content within their databases as well as links to external newspapers for current events. Many students also have access to a variety of magazines through Sora, an ebook and audiobook platform. Magazines and newspapers have always contained advertisements and been a critical source of information to enhance students' learning.

An important component of digital and media literacy is learning how to give credit and cite sources. In order to do this, databases and scholarly articles rely on embedded links to original articles and citation generators. Embedded links and promotions are integral parts of the digital platform and cannot be selectively removed without altering the core of the resource. The undue burden of requiring vendors to certify their content is free of advertisements, promotions or embedded links will also result in vastly fewer vendors willing to contract with public schools. Access to databases that contain reputable academic journals, historical archives and primary sources will be restricted or lost all together. Students in underfunded schools will bear the brunt of this loss, as they rely on digital resources for access to high-quality research materials.

Many school districts rely on a partnership with their public library in order to provide access to digital education resources at little to no cost to the schools, ensuring equitable access to valuable research tools. HB25-1158 would put that partnership in jeopardy and add an unnecessary burden on schools to report agreements with annual notifications with public libraries. Public libraries would come under scrutiny and students would have limited access to essential learning materials to support their information literacy skills. Due to budget shortfalls, other school districts are considering such partnerships, which could now be in danger of not happening.

I urge lawmakers to reject HB25-1158. Restricting access to digital resources is only going to hurt our students in this rapidly changing digital age. We need to use these resources to teach students to navigate online information critically. I advocate that policies

	<p>promote, rather than hinder, access to reliable and comprehensive research materials in our public schools across the state. Information and media literacy is a vital component of the education process in a rapidly changing world filled with digital media and educators rely on access to high-quality research materials and databases to achieve that goal.</p>
<p>Roxanne Aviles Against themselves</p>	<p>Honorable committee members, my name is Roxanne Aviles and I am testifying today on behalf of myself as a veteran educator as well as a mother of children in schools spanning from elementary through higher education.</p> <p>House Bill 25-1158 seeks to regulate digital research collections used in public schools by prohibiting advertisements, promotions, and embedded links. While the bill’s goal is to create an ad-free, distraction-free learning environment, its implementation presents several challenges from an educator’s perspective. These concerns primarily revolve around restricted access to essential educational resources, increased administrative burdens, and potential hesitancy in utilizing valuable digital tools.</p> <p>One of the primary issues teachers may face with this bill is its broad restriction on embedded links within digital research collections. While the bill aims to prevent unnecessary commercial exposure, this prohibition could inadvertently block access to valuable academic materials that enhance learning. For example, the loss of access to primary sources and scholarly research.</p> <p>Many reputable educational databases, such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, or government archives, include embedded links directing students to peer-reviewed journals, historical documents, and primary sources. If these links are restricted under the bill’s provisions, students may lose access to crucial research necessary for developing critical thinking and analytical skills.</p> <p>History teachers, for instance, often direct students to the National Archives or Library of Congress for primary documents. Science educators rely on sources like NASA, the CDC, and the NIH to provide real-world data for research projects. Blocking links to these resources would force educators to find alternative, potentially less comprehensive sources or require students to navigate complex</p>

searches independently, which may not be developmentally appropriate for younger learners.

Another concern would be challenges in teaching digital literacy and research skills. A critical aspect of modern education is teaching students how to evaluate and navigate online information responsibly. Teachers use curated digital research collections to introduce students to safe, credible sources rather than allowing them to rely solely on open web searches, where misinformation is prevalent. If embedded links to reliable sources are eliminated, students may be left without proper guidance on how to differentiate between scholarly research and unreliable or biased information, undermining the very digital literacy skills necessary for success in higher education and the workforce.

Finally, my greatest fear is that this bill will impact my ability as an educator to differentiate learning for my students and to keep them engaged in their learning. Teachers frequently tailor instruction to meet the diverse needs of their students by providing different levels of reading materials and multimedia resources. Embedded links allow educators to supplement traditional textbooks with interactive simulations, educational videos, and expert lectures from university platforms. If HB 25-1158 restricts such links, students who benefit from visual or interactive learning methods may struggle with engagement and comprehension. For example, a biology teacher might provide links to virtual dissections or 3D modeling of cellular structures, making abstract concepts more accessible. Without these interactive resources, educators may find it more difficult to support varied learning styles effectively.

While the intention of HB 25-1158 is to shield students from commercial distractions, the broad ban on embedded links risks significantly reducing students' access to quality educational content. Teachers depend on these digital tools to foster research skills, provide differentiated instruction, and connect students to credible sources. By restricting these resources, the bill may ultimately hinder both student engagement and academic growth, creating additional barriers to effective teaching and learning.

I urge you to vote NO on HB 25-1158 as it is not in the best interest of our educators nor our students. Thank you.

<p>Katheryn Lofstedt Against themselves</p>	<p>As a Colorado Social Studies educator I implore you to consider the ramifications of this bill to those of us on the front lines guiding students towards digital literacy. How are we to ensure our children are prepared for a future embedded in the digital world without access to that world? How will students practice in a low stakes environment assessing the validity of websites with advertisements without access to websites with advertisements? This bill would handcuff educators and handicap the next generation of Colorado leaders.</p>
<p>Susan McDonald For themselves</p>	<p>Let's keep it simple. You were elected to protect families and forests (not criminals selling children or corporations infiltrating our schools). Vote "yes" on this bill, our kids are up against astounding darkness. One child seeing more naked people in one night than a king saw in a lifetime hundreds of years ago. Our culture is at stake, technology isn't going to save us bc it got us into this mess, but we can have boundaries and that's what you're being asked to do today. set a boundary. Vote for HB125-1158!</p>
<p>Jessica Capsel Against themselves</p>	<p>As a parent of two school-aged children, I urge you to vote NO on Colorado HB25-1158.</p> <p>This bill addresses a problem that simply does not exist. Schools are already taking necessary precautions to ensure students aren't exposed to harmful content, including pornography, drugs, vaping, or firearms, as Representative Bradley's alarmist claims would suggest. The systems already in place at schools tightly control the digital resources accessible to students. There is no widespread issue with inappropriate ads or materials in schools, and this bill appears to be a thinly veiled attempt to push a far-right political agenda under the guise of protecting our children.</p> <p>I believe that the true intent behind this bill is to open the door for organizations like PragerU and Hillsdale College—groups aligned with Moms for Liberty, which Representative Bradley chairs—to infiltrate our schools under the pretense of being "non-profit" educational resources. By restricting commercial digital resources, the bill would clear the way for these organizations to dominate the educational landscape, potentially pushing out more balanced and diverse educational content.</p> <p>Additionally, this bill would severely limit teachers' ability to access valuable and innovative resources, stifling creativity and preventing our students from experiencing a rich, dynamic education. Schools already invest significant resources into vetting educational materials</p>

	<p>to ensure quality and appropriateness. This bill would only create more bureaucratic barriers and wasteful spending, without addressing any real issues.</p> <p>I trust the teachers and administrators at my children’s school to protect them from inappropriate content, and I do not need Representative Bradley or any external group dictating what my children should or should not be exposed to. This bill is unnecessary, harmful, and will only serve to limit our children's learning opportunities.</p> <p>Please vote NO on SB1158. Thank you</p>
<p>Autumn Leopold Against themselves</p>	<p>February 20, 2025</p> <p>Senate Education Committee Members. RE HB25-1158</p> <p>As a mother of a current high schooler I can tell you this bill is actually ridiculous and I URGE you for the sake of properly educating our children to KILL THIS BILL!</p> <p>Please allow me to explain:</p> <p>Completely takes away local control from school districts who may have policies in place addressing this issue. Policies that allow their district to use ad blockers and extensions to block ads for the internet and You Tube.</p> <p>Technology Directors already restrict ads on school computers. If school districts have Chromebooks then they also have Technology Directors who are using software ad blockers and internet extensions to block ads. They also use a program to flag any search for terms like vaping, porc, weapons, guns, drugs, gambling etc. The teacher and vice principal get flagged if these terms are searched for and if an add is clicked on and something like this pops up there is a flag. The students get a conversation with the vice principal and the parents get a phone call. I know this because my son flagged for looking up a World War II gun for a history assignment and another</p>

	<p>time for asking his computer “what happens after you die” for an assignment. This program is very sensitive.</p> <p>Local school districts have Curriculum Committees and or District Accountability Committees who already have processes in place to vet sources. These committees of volunteers will spend sometimes months going over and vetting curriculums that can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars for the districts. The school boards of each district get presented with the curriculums and they vote whether to approve them. Imagine all of the school districts in Colorado having to toss their curriculums due to this bill!</p> <p>Potential Legal and Financial Implications: Non-compliance with the bill’s provisions may lead to contract terminations and potential legal disputes with vendors. Schools could face financial repercussions, including reimbursement claims and costs associated with seeking alternative educational resources, which may strain already limited budgets.</p> <p>The requirement for vendors to remove any content deemed as advertisements within three business days upon notification places a significant burden on educational content providers. This could result in lawsuits by vendors against the school district that purchased their products.</p> <p>Would school districts be forced to buy other curriculums (which we all know they don’t have the money for)?</p> <p>Would school districts be forced to use curriculums of semi-religious nonprofits aka non-commercialized sources, like Hillsdale, Prager U, or the Trump 1776 curriculums to name a few? Therein lies the Trojan Horse.</p> <p>House Bill 25-1158 defines “advertisement” as the act of promoting, publishing, disseminating, soliciting, or circulating online images, text, articles, videos, or audio communications that promote a product, service, business, or industry to a student.</p> <p>This definition is overly broad and could inadvertently encompass valuable educational content. For instance, many academic databases and digital research collections include embedded links to external resources, such as scholarly articles or educational videos, which are essential for comprehensive learning. Under the bill’s current language, these embedded links might be classified as</p>
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	<p>advertisements, leading to their removal and potentially limiting students' access to critical information.</p> <p>Increased Administrative Burden: The legislation requires public schools to include specific termination clauses in contracts with digital content providers, monitor compliance, and report any violations. This process involves notifying vendors within one business day of a reported violation and ensuring the removal of prohibited content within three business days. Such requirements could introduce unnecessary bureaucracy, diverting time and resources away from instructional activities.</p> <p>Censorship of or Restricted Access to Educational Resources: The bill's broad prohibition of embedded links could inadvertently block access to essential academic tools. Many educational databases and digital collections utilize embedded links to provide access to scholarly articles, citation networks, and reference materials. Eliminating these links may disrupt student learning and research capabilities. While containing embedded links or references, are not intended for commercial promotion but rather to enhance educational experiences.</p> <p>Critical Thinking by our Children: Local businesses sponsor sports teams with banners Crayola Crayons, Mead notebooks, Ticonderoga Pencils Our kids need to develop the critical thinking skills to know what ads are in bad taste and what ads or because they will be skiing them the rest of their lives. If a kid clicks on an ad that turns out to be inappropriate they can inform the teacher who can then take it out of the lesson or curriculum.</p> <p>Please VOTE NO on this bill.</p> <p>Thank You</p>
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<p>JEANY RUSH For themselves</p>	<p>TO: House Committee for Education RE: HB25-1158 Digital Education Materials 2-21-25 Sponsors: Bradley, Joseph FROM: Jeany Rush, Colorado Springs Constituent VOTE: YES This bill is a necessary level of protections for our schools, students, and educators, to keep vendors from exposing our youth to outside sites, sources, and materials which could do major harms. Our libraries are currently violating our children rights with x rated books, materials, platforms, no real safety walls exist. I am in specific speaking of school libraries. Further, I have written to schools, libraries, etc. to create firewalls/ portals from schools to public libraries. That is not burning materials, just placing them in a public source, rather than a school environment, which used to be a "Protected and Safe Space" but no longer is that. Keeping accountability on the top of the chart, and on the table, makes this bill really important. Thank You for putting this bill forward. The amount of damage done to young minds in the last 5 years alone is beyond criminal, and we have an obligation as parents, grandparents, to stop this NOW!</p>
<p>Veronica Baker Against themselves</p>	<p>I would like to share my thoughts on opposing this bill, as it limits the research skills for students. When conducting research on a chosen topic, students will be learning valuable skills such as how to use databases, evaluate source credibility and tracing the path of previous study. This bill limits how students can practice and engage with research methods by not allowing them to follow outside hyperlinks provided in the research documents. This is not helpful and it is disparaging to the students in their learning discovery process.</p>

<p>Jeralee Gonzalez Against themselves</p>	<p>I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB25-1158. While I understand the intent behind this legislation is to protect students from commercial advertisements and promotional content in educational materials, I believe the bill inadvertently opens the door for undue external influence over what students are taught and what materials are available to them. This concern is particularly important when considering the potential impact on parental rights, the diversity of educational resources and the overall integrity of our public school system.</p> <p>First and foremost, HB25-1158 allows vendors and outside organizations to dictate what educational content can be included in digital resources used by schools. While the bill attempts to guard against commercial advertisements, it does not address the very real risk that religious groups, political organizations, or other interest groups could exert influence over the content available to students. This could lead to biased, ideologically-driven educational materials being introduced into the classroom, potentially undermining the objective and well-rounded education that parents expect for their children.</p> <p>Moreover, this bill could create a situation where these external groups gain significant control over what students are taught, circumventing the role that parents play in choosing and guiding the educational experiences of their children. In many cases, parents have carefully considered the educational materials that align with their values, beliefs, and aspirations for their children's education.</p> <p>This bill, however, risks overriding those choices by allowing external forces to dictate educational content that may not reflect the wishes of families, particularly in communities where certain ideological groups hold significant sway.</p> <p>I am deeply concerned that HB25-1158 could unintentionally limit students' access to essential academic resources. In an era where research and scholarly articles are frequently cited and linked to in educational resources, this bill's provisions could discourage vendors from including external links that could be critical for students' academic growth. By potentially eliminating links to scholarly articles or restricting access to a broader spectrum of academic perspectives, this bill might inadvertently narrow students' educational experiences, leaving them with more limited, one-dimensional view of the world.</p> <p>Lastly, while the bill purports to protect students from harmful content, it does so in a way that could restrict the diversity of ideas that are vital for critical thinking and academic development. Schools should be environments where students are exposed to a wide range</p>
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	<p>of perspectives-both within and beyond their community's immediate values-allowing them to form their own ideas and engage in thoughtful discourse. This bill risks turning educational resources into tools for ideological control, limiting students' ability to receive a balanced education.</p> <p>In conclusion, I urge the committee to reconsider this bill, as it has the potential to undermine parental rights, limit students' access to diverse academic resources, and introduce external influence into the classroom in ways to do not serve the best interests of students or families. Education should be a collaborative effort that respects the autonomy of families and the academic integrity of the school system.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>
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I, Rae Ciciora, strongly oppose HB25-1158, as it would significantly hinder students' access to critical digital resources essential for developing their information literacy skills and conducting research. By imposing overly restrictive content limitations on curated digital research collections, this legislation threatens to deprive students of the essential tools they need to succeed academically and become informed, critical thinkers.

HB25-1158 is overly broad in its language and is flawed as it censors products containing magazines and newspapers and web links. This will lead to a comprehensive ban of such content across Colorado schools.

Passage of the bill would make it illegal for schools to license legitimate sources of information contained in digital research collections – these are products and services which have been available to schools directly from a variety of vendors for decades, or made available to schools through cost-saving consortial license arrangements, or through local partnerships between school districts, public libraries and community colleges.

- Products like Britannica School, World Book Encyclopedia and Scholastic Go
- Collections through Gale's In Context series (which includes a broad array of published resources for Science, U.S. History, Biography, News, and World History)
- Magazine content and newspaper content published in Time, Newsweek, Fox News, The Denver Post along with thousands of other publications

These types of products and publications, licensed from these vendors and other vendors, all contain links, and many of them include advertising. It's no secret that magazines and newspapers contain advertising. For many decades, school students have used magazines and newspapers and encyclopedias as valid sources of research and reading. Simply put, the proposed legislation seeks to censor and remove access to these resources.

Parents or guardians of school-aged children already have the right to challenge curriculum and content in schools through existing school district policies and locally-established district procedures. This bill proposes circumventing those local-control procedures when challenges involve digital research collections and library collections.

Further, the bill proposes an onerous, bureaucratic, state-run process for individuals to report their personal concerns about content and links in those digital research and library collections. The bill outlines an unfunded process that would be open to abuse and a waste of taxpayer dollars.

Assuming our education systems in Colorado are designed to help students become better informed and to improve their digital and media literacy – and most importantly, to help students develop critical thinking skills – the bill's proposed censorship of various forms of media in schools just doesn't make sense.

As an example, let's say Mark, a Colorado 8th grade student, is assigned to do a research project on Civics in his 8th grade social studies class (see CDE 8th Grade Civics, page 108 & 109, <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cosocialstudies/cas-ss-p12-2022>).

The essential questions outlined in the CDE Social Studies Standards for this unit are:

1. How have citizens and groups influenced change?
2. What are the roles and responsibilities for citizens?
3. What are the various ways that the government may respond to civic voice and participation?
4. How has civic participation impacted the development of government and civil rights in America?
5. What is more effective, diplomacy or debate?
6. How have political parties formed and changed over time?
7. How have Americans fought to preserve their rights, outlined in the Bill of Rights, and when the government violated those rights?

Luckily, Mark's school district (or school, or school library) subscribes to Gale in Context, a suite of magazines targeted to a middle school audience (meaning the articles and advertising are appropriate for ages 10-14), as well as a partnership with the local public library with access to several newspapers that cover legislation both locally and at the national level.

Rather than relying on a Google search or Youtube videos submitted by any number of unvetted influencers or crowd sourced commentary, Mark is able to focus his research by using primary and secondary sources found in databases such as Gale In Context, and digital newspapers and magazines.

While Google might be a good place to start, a reputable database will produce far greater, more relevant, and age appropriate search results for Mark's research. Gale In Context will provide links (external) to academic journals, magazines, newspapers, and encyclopedic entries. Digital issues of magazines and newspapers not included in Gale's suite of products may provide additional perspectives using search fields.

Using these resources to answer the CDE's essential questions of this 8th grade social studies standard, Mark will demonstrate the disciplinary, information, and media literacy skills necessary to demonstrate mastery of the Evidence Outcomes (see CDE 8th Grade Civics, page 108 & 109, <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cosocialstudies/cas-ss-p12-2022>).

1. Use content-specific technology tools to support learning and research.
2. Use effective decision-making and problem-solving skills in public and private life.
3. Accept and demonstrate civic responsibility for the well-being of oneself, family, and the community.
4. Conduct research by locating, gathering, organizing information and data, and evaluating online and print resources.
5. Demonstrate positive social and ethical behaviors when using technology and discuss consequences of inappropriate use.
6. Compares and contrasts evidence from multiple sources to seek, find, and prove corroboration.

The availability of these tools is essential for students, kindergartners through 12th grade, in Colorado to meet the standards set out by the Colorado Department of Education. HB25-1158 would make student success in the state's curriculum very difficult, sending students into a wild digital information world without guardrails (google, youtube, social media, etc).

I urge lawmakers to reject this bill in its current form. Instead of restricting access to vital digital resources, efforts should focus on enhancing students' ability to navigate online information critically. Removing databases and newspapers from school collections due to embedded links or minor promotional content is an unnecessary and harmful limitation that ultimately deprives students of the educational opportunities they need to succeed in the digital age. I advocate for policies that promote, rather than hinder, access to reliable and comprehensive research materials in our public schools.

Thank you,

Rae Ciciora

Citizen, parent, and librarian

# Opposition to HB25-1158: Protecting Students' Access to Critical Digital Resources



This bill appears to be about **restricting commercial publishers'** ability to serve our public schools. Many of these publishers are already deeply embedded in education. Digital content for schools and public libraries is already subject to internet safety filters and protocols that schools and districts.

**The full text of HB25-1158 mentions the word "commercial" fourteen (14) times.** The word **"sacred" is mentioned twice**, which is an unusual choice of words to describe the government's role in maintaining high-integrity content. The bill is **only targeting advertising and promotions for commercial (for-profit) publishers.** Where does that leave **nonprofit publishers tied to Christian Nationalism, like Prager U?**<sup>1</sup>

## Looking Deeper than the Surface

**HB25-1158 presents serious concerns regarding potential hidden intent and unintended consequences.** This bill appears to offer a **bipartisan approach** to restricting undesirable marketing and content in educational materials. However, **closer examination reveals significant threats to students' access to credible digital resources**, raising concerns about censorship and broader ideological efforts to control information access.

**On its surface**, the bill's language regarding blocking advertisements and promotions may seem to protect students from unwanted marketing. However, the **provision restricting embedded links raises concerns about limiting access to legitimate academic and journalistic sources.** Evidence suggests that this bill may serve as a **strategic vehicle for broader censorship efforts, similar to legislation enacted in Tennessee**<sup>2</sup> and other states, which has been used to curtail access to educational materials under the guise of protecting students.

**This bill may be a Trojan Horse for broader censorship efforts** that would ultimately restrict students' access to credible information sources. **Operatives tied to Project 2025**<sup>3</sup> and **Christian Nationalist**<sup>4</sup> entities have been developing and distributing sample laws and policies throughout the country to undermine both state and federal laws. **Organizations like Moms for Liberty** have been distributing sample policies and laws through their network, including in Colorado, which are frequently discussed on the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/sep/06/prageru-climate-change-denier-republican-donors>

<sup>2</sup> See "K-12 Education" in this article: [New Tennessee laws to take effect July 1, 2022 | Local News | local3news.com](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Project 2025 and education: A lot of bad ideas, some more actionable than others](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Project 2025: The Blueprint for Christian Nationalist Regime Change - Kettering Foundation](#)

Facebook page, Thompson Reform Watch.<sup>5</sup> Media reports and social media posts have covered the **Moms for Liberty relationships**<sup>6</sup> and activism of several public officials and personalities who've **threatened school board officials, spread misinformation, and harassed Coloradans**<sup>7</sup> who oppose their **divisive, discriminatory rhetoric that elevates the rights of some parents over all parents.**

**HB25-1158** in its current state **would significantly hinder students' access to essential digital resources** necessary for **developing information literacy** and **conducting academic research.** This bill introduces **unrealistic compliance requirements** for digital content providers, **threatens critical research tools,** and places an **unnecessary administrative burden** on public schools.

### **Concerns About Underlying Intent**

One of the bill's sponsors has been associated with efforts to limit educational freedoms and impose ideological constraints on curriculum content. An elected public official, **she has been criticized for attacking**<sup>8</sup> **teachers**<sup>9</sup>, **parents and students who oppose her extremist beliefs**<sup>10</sup>.

While **certain provisions** of the bill, such as restricting advertisements and promotions, **may appear to protect students** from marketing influences, **the prohibition on embedded links raises concerns** about potential censorship. **This bill contains language similar to legislation in Tennessee that has been used to limit access to educational materials under the guise of blocking obscene content.**<sup>11</sup> This raises the possibility that **HB25-1158 could be a Trojan Horse for broader censorship** efforts that would ultimately restrict students' access to credible information sources. The 1982 Pico case decision by the US Supreme Court discusses students' First Amendment rights and access to information.<sup>12</sup>

Research from the EveryLibrary Institute highlights **the increasing trend of censorship in digital materials,** as detailed in their report on state library database contracts.<sup>13</sup> The report emphasizes how legislative efforts like HB25-1158 **create undue barriers** for students and educators, effectively **limiting access** to a broad range of academic content under the **pretext of content regulation.** Such measures not only **compromise**

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<sup>5</sup> TRW began as a watchdog site covering issues related to the Thompson School District in Loveland. You can find many posts related to these policies by [searching their page](#).

<sup>6</sup> [Colorado Lawmaker Leads Anti-LGBT Hate Group Amid Reelection Campaign](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Labeled as a Hate Group, Moms for Liberty Doubles Down](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Colorado Rep. Brandi Bradley Appears to Condone Death Threats Against Colleagues, LGBTQ+ Activists - by Jan Wondra - Ark Valley Voice](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Douglas County school board chides state rep who called out teacher on social media over Mona Lisa theory](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Colorado Lawmaker Leads Anti-LGBT Hate Group Amid Reelection Campaign](#)

<sup>11</sup> See the section, "K-12 Education" in this article: [New Tennessee laws to take effect July 1, 2022 | Local News | local3news.com](#)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1981/80-2043>

<sup>13</sup> [Policy Brief: Weathering the Attacks on State Library Database Contracts - Policy Report](#)

educational integrity but also set a dangerous precedent for restricting intellectual freedom.

Christian Nationalist education institutions have invested heavily in digital assets. Prager U<sup>14</sup> is one of the most recognized publishers associated with the movement<sup>15</sup>. Given their emphasis on digital resources and their focus on censorship, the lack of opposition by lobbyists representing organizations like them should prompt questions.<sup>16</sup>

### **Additional Concerns Voiced by the Colorado Association of Libraries**

In addition to concerns about the underlying intent of the bill, members of our network have also reviewed the February 14 **Colorado Association of Libraries' Statement to Oppose HB25-1158**<sup>17</sup>. There are four additional areas of concern from CAL for Coloradans to consider as grounds for opposition to the bill.

**Impact on Information Literacy and Research Skills:** Digital archives and news sources play a crucial role in helping students learn to craft research papers, evaluate sources, and build arguments grounded in evidence. Many well-regarded academic and journalistic outlets incorporate hyperlinks, ads, and sponsored content as common digital components that offer important context and avenues for deeper investigation. Eliminating these features would strip away essential educational materials, severely hindering students' capacity to cultivate critical thinking and media literacy. This indicates that the proposed legislation could pave the way for organized efforts by political and religious groups to restrict students' access to publicly available information, and more importantly, **stunt this generation's ability to evaluate information.**

**Unrealistic Compliance Requirements:** The legislation requires digital resource providers to remove designated content within three days or risk having their contracts revoked. This demand is unrealistic due to the intricate nature of digital content management, where embedded links and advertisements are essential components of numerous academic and research platforms. Enforcing this rule would cause unwarranted disruptions and discourage credible vendors from partnering with public schools. The requirement is **so impractical that adhering to it would be nearly impossible.**

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<sup>14</sup> [PragerU Digital Resources](#)

<sup>15</sup> [PragerU Resources for Educators & Parents \(PREP\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> The lobbyist report as of 02/14/25 lists the Colorado Parent Action Network (CPAN) as "Supporting" and the Colorado Association of Libraries as "Opposing." The remaining 32 lobbyists are either "Monitoring" or "Amending."  
[Colorado Capitol Watch, Lobbyists, HB25-1158](#)

<sup>17</sup> <https://cal-webs.org/announcements.php>

**Reduction in Access to Quality Educational Resources:** Mandating that vendors guarantee their collections contain no advertisements, promotions, or embedded links, HB25-1158 would likely **discourage many providers from working with public schools. This would create an opportunity for vendors with censorship agendas or extremist motives to fill the void.** The resulting decline in available resources would **particularly harm students in underfunded and rural schools**, who depend on digital databases for access to quality academic content, primary sources, and historical records.

**Harmful Impact on Public Library and Public School Partnerships:** Public libraries are essential in providing fair access to educational resources by working with schools to offer free research database access, a role that is especially critical in rural areas. The bill's mandate for schools to report these partnerships and issue yearly notifications creates an **unnecessary bureaucratic hurdle**, which could deter schools from collaborating with libraries. These limitations would **reduce students' access to vital research tools and diminish the importance of public school libraries** in K-12 education, a **cornerstone of American public education and Colorado** since the late 1800s.<sup>18</sup>

### **Conclusion:**

HB25-1158's operational impacts are **blatantly impractical**, which suggests it is ill-conceived without proper stakeholder engagement. **Coloradans concerned about the dangers of censorship should view this bill with skepticism**, especially given the ongoing attacks on Democracy associated with Project 2025's influence on the federal government. **It's time to protect Colorado from extremism. We have a responsibility to ensure that this bill does not create a precedent or an exploitable loophole that extremists will leverage to undermine democracy and public education in Colorado.**

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<sup>18</sup> See the digital archive of [Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Colorado](#)

CONCERNED  
WOMEN *for* AMERICA  
LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE

February 13, 2025  
Education

Testimony in Support of HB25-1158

Madame Chair, Lukens, and members of the Committee, I am Dr. Karen Pennington, nurse, educator, and State Director for Concerned Women for America (CWA) of Colorado. We are the largest grassroots, public policy women's organization in the country. Today I am testifying for Concerned Women for America Legislative Action Committee in support of HB25-1158.

This bill is about protecting our children from harm, something we as parents, grandparents, legislators, and educators can agree is most important as we are responsible for protecting children from online exposure to harmful or obscene content. Of note, UNICEF found digital online sexually explicit imagery resulted in social isolation, substance abuse, self-harm or suicide, cyberbullying, peer-to-peer violence, and child-targeted marketing as potential risks that adults must be vigilant to protect children from<sup>1</sup>.

As legislators, you can make a difference and pass legislation to move in that direction. Requiring a contract termination clause if a collection is found to contain material or direct students to material that is harmful seems a reasonable and appropriate recourse for all of us as stakeholders. We expect public schools to be safe places for children. Children should not be exposed to risks inappropriate for normal growth and development. The mounting evidence that digital media use is linked to increasing rates of depression requires we protect children through legislation<sup>2</sup>.

HB25-1158 is common sense logic and Concerned Women for America of Colorado urges you to: acknowledge the extent of this harm by enhancing the integrity of digital education materials in public schools.

Please Vote "YES" on HB25-1158

Thank You.

Karen Pennington, PhD, RN  
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ConcernedWomen.org

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/protection/violence-against-children-online#:~:text=Cyberbullying%20and%20other%20forms%20of%20peer-to-peer%20violence%20can,incl%20messages%20that%20incite%20self-harm%20and%20even%20suicide.>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.sciencenews.org/article/social-media-teens-mental-health>