

Submitter: Kayla Golka
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1583

To whom it may concern,

Book bans are harmful. What lesson does it teach the young minds of our future? Banning books teaches students that their discretion is not as valuable, that we live in a society where it acceptable to silence the voices and stories of others, and tests just how "free" and "public" their education is. As a concerned citizen and advocate for education, I stand firmly against the practice of banning books in public schools. The censorship of literature not only undermines the principles of academic freedom and intellectual inquiry but also poses significant harm to students' development and their ability to engage critically with the world around them.

First and foremost, banning books limits students' access to diverse perspectives and ideas. Literature serves as a mirror reflecting the complexities of society, providing students with the opportunity to explore different cultures, historical events, and social issues. By censoring certain books, educators deprive students of the chance to confront challenging topics and expand their understanding of the world.

Furthermore, book bans stifle critical thinking and intellectual growth. Education should encourage students to question, analyze, and form their own opinions. Exposure to controversial or uncomfortable themes in literature fosters empathy, tolerance, and open-mindedness. When books are banned, students are denied the chance to grapple with complex issues and develop the skills necessary to navigate the complexities of the real world.

Additionally, book bans infringe upon the rights of students, parents, and educators. In a democratic society, individuals have the right to access information and ideas freely. By imposing restrictions on what can be taught or read in schools, authorities undermine these fundamental rights and hinder the pursuit of knowledge.

Moreover, book bans send a message of censorship and intolerance, perpetuating a culture of fear and conformity. When certain viewpoints are silenced, it becomes increasingly difficult for students to engage in meaningful dialogue and understand perspectives different from their own. This narrow-minded approach to education hinders the development of critical thinking skills and undermines the values of democracy and pluralism.

In conclusion, book bans in public schools are detrimental to the educational experience and the intellectual development of students. Rather than shielding

students from uncomfortable or controversial ideas, educators should embrace the opportunity to foster dialogue, critical thinking, and empathy through literature. I urge policymakers, administrators, and educators to reject censorship and uphold the principles of academic freedom and intellectual inquiry in our public schools. Our students deserve nothing less than a rich, diverse, and intellectually stimulating educational experience.

Sincerely,

Kayla Golka
High School Teacher