

Personal Testimony – SB 738 – Freedom to Read Act

SB 738 would address the onslaught of book bans that has taken over the US.

Most people think that these battles are only happening in places like Florida or Texas, but they are taking place and have been won right in my hometown in Carroll County, Maryland.

In Carroll County, the school board tends to cater to interest groups such as Moms for Liberty, rather than students or teachers. Statements accusing LGBTQ+ people of “grooming children” have occurred right in front of my eyes.

However, in these same meetings, the opinions of young people and many teachers have been utterly disregarded and ignored, while words like “diversity” and “inclusion” become trigger words.

We cannot let groups endorsing hate and discrimination shape what books are available in our schools and libraries. When the same groups and people endorsing the banning of pride flags in Carroll County Public Schools (which was passed by the Board of Education) endorse book banning, their motives are clear.

The form to request that a book be removed from a Carroll County Library is simple and doesn't even require that you have read the book. This allows people to request that a book be banned without even understanding its basic plot.

In the age of information, the internet is a constant source of information – truths and lies, facts and opinions, prejudice and acceptance. However, books allow one to step into someone's shoes and think critically.

Access to books of diverse perspectives has personally shaped my educational journey, and in my personal opinion, leads to less discrimination and hatred of those who are considered “different from the norm” societally.

Therefore, I urge a favorable report on SB 738.

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