



# Southern Maryland Regional Library Association, Inc.

*Advancing Library Excellence*

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February 1, 2024

Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair  
Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Committee Members,

I am writing in opposition to **SB0355 – Criminal Law – Display of Obscene Materials to Minors – Prohibition**. As a librarian deeply committed to supporting lifelong learning, I am concerned that the language in this bill criminalizes the work of school librarians who have a responsibility to provide age appropriate materials to students, including materials on health topics.

The definition of “distribute” including the language “to rent” also presents a challenge. Library materials are available to support learners of all interests and there is no requirement that a student has to check out a book simply because the library makes it available. This broad definition ignores the unique nature of libraries which operate under a philosophy of maintaining a varied collection while allowing readers and caregivers the right to *not* borrow or engage with materials that are not of interest to them.

The definition of “illicit sex” ignores the fact that human anatomy and sexual health are topics that are considered age appropriate by some caregivers. To create a blanket ban on these topics will infringe upon the rights of these students and caregivers.

The bill cites the definition of “obscene,” which library materials are not. School libraries operate under collection development policies that take into consideration a variety of factors to support the educational needs of students.

I request that the Committee does not pass this bill so that Maryland’s students can continue to have access to materials that help them become healthy, well informed and productive members of our society.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ashley Teagle  
CEO