

LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

Bill: SB 566 - Family Law- Fundamental Parental Rights

I am submitting this testimony in OPPOSITION to SB 566

Like many other people, we all want a proper education for students, we universally recognize that a well founded curriculum builds knowledge and extends our perspectives beyond that of which we have on our own. To better understand our world around us, students need to both be able to see themselves in what they're reading as reflection of who they are and their histories. However it is also encouraged to see outwards and consider perspectives and experiences that vastly differ from their own. We also know that exposing students to limited and skewed versions of history, health, or literature that neglect entire populations using insular and homogenous materials forces them to develop a skewed inaccurate version of the diversity of our society. This is problematic for underrepresented groups – particularly LGBTQIA+ students and students of color, I myself being both, and I know that the result of misinformation is the creation of a hostile and unsupportive educational environment. That research shows contributes to lower academic performance, lower GPA, increased absences, increased likelihood of school dropout, and less likelihood of attending an institution of higher education.

I myself am not a parent but I work with parents and know that when parents work to support teachers and schools the result enhances learner outcomes. But, the Parents Bill of Rights does not seek to strengthen and support our educators. Rather, it seeks to promote parent involvement as a means to undermine educators' professional judgments and advance narrow self-serving narratives. Should this bill pass, it will create conflict between parents and the education community that will lead to many highly qualified teachers exiting the profession. And many times, those highly qualified teachers, can inspire the next generation to be our doctors, teachers and leaders.

Emboldening close-minded people with the opportunity to object to curriculum and other materials, on the basis of personal beliefs about morality, religion, personal philosophy, or political ideology is dangerous and only promotes intolerance and misinformation. I urge you senators, oppose this bill and recommend an UNFAVORABLE report in committee. Thank you.