



TESTIMONY FOR HB0785 Freedom to Read Act

Bill Sponsors: Delegate D. Jones

Committee: Ways and Means

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0785 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state with well over 30,000 members.

MLC supports a bill that requires our state-funded libraries operate by state standards and that employees cannot be dismissed if they are operating within the context of the state standards.

Our values are consistent with the state standards set forth in this bill. These standards enforce our basic rights: library materials, services, and resources exist and should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all persons the library serves; a library should not exclude material from its catalogue because of the origin, background, or views of a person who created the material; and a library should not prohibit or remove material from its catalogue because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

It is a shame in the period in U.S. history of book bans and book burnings, that these standards must be legislated. We agree the standards should be legislated and enforced, though.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports this bill and recommends a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.