

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my strong concerns in relation to the below bill currently under consideration.

HB0025 Public Schools - Sexually Explicit Materials - Prohibited in Libraries and Media Centers

This bill is just another manifestation of the national attack on the LGBTQ+ community from the Republican Party and the far right. They see a resurgent culture war, specifically focused on the ability for the LGBTQ+ community to have the right to exist visibly in the public sphere, as key to electoral success with their base since they do not have any substantive solutions to offer for the pressing issues of our time.

HB0025 amounts to the Maryland equivalent of the "Don't Say Gay" law enacted in my home state of Florida. We continue to see the ramifications of this law on the LGBTQ+ community:

- forcing teachers out of jobs if they don't hide who they are
- erasing any acknowledgement of the existence of LGBTQ+ families and children under the absurd pretense that LGBTQ+ issues are inherently sexual
- continuing the erasure of the existence and contributions of the LGBTQ+ community in American and world history
- demonizing the right to exist of anyone who does not fit a certain way of being

The beauty of the world lies in the richness and diversity of the people that inhabit it. That a certain segment of the political spectrum is more obsessed with the sexual appetites and acts of the LGBTQ+ than actual queer folks themselves is not reason to enact legislation based in fear, loathing, and a desire to shame an entire community back into the closet.

I am firmly in opposition of this bill and pray it will not make it out of committee. I hope Maryland's elected officials will stand in opposition of the demonization and erasure of the LGBTQ+ community. We do not need to import the hate we are seeing in other states into this one.

Thank you,

Rev. Ron Padrón