



## Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

### Testimony to Oppose HB 25 Public Schools - Sexually Explicit Materials - Prohibited in Libraries and Media Centers

TO: Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair and Members of the Ways and Means Committee.  
FROM: Kari Alperovitz-Bichell, MD, MPH  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland  
DATE: January 31st, 2024

I am Kari Alperovitz-Bichell, MD representing both myself as a physician and as a person of faith, and the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland. We urge you to oppose **HB 25 - Public Schools - Sexually Explicit Materials - Prohibited in Libraries and Media Centers**.

As a Unitarian Universalist, we believe in the free and responsible search for truth and meaning. We also believe in accepting one another and encouraging their spiritual growth. While the idea of protecting children against obscenity initially seems sound, this bill would amount to book banning and censorship.

Medical information regarding reproduction and sexuality could easily be considered by some as “obscene” and be banned under this bill. Works of fiction that sensitively explore difficult topics could also easily be banned. Librarians fearing for their jobs might feel forced to define obscenity in an overly broad way when choosing materials.

Our children and youth need reliable sources for this kind of information as they navigate difficult topics. Instead of dubious, online sites, they should have access to libraries curated by librarians and stocked with multiple points of view. The censorship that this bill would create would be particularly harmful for those of our youth who are sexual minorities, and therefore already quite isolated. As I am sure committee members are aware, such youth have high suicide rates. They need to be able to find accurate and affirming information—it can be lifesaving.

Please vote no on HB 25.

Sincerely

*Kari Alperovitz-Bichell, MD, MPH*

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