

Witness: Tara and Matthew Thompson
Jurisdiction: Baltimore County
Bill: HB0785 - Freedom to Read Act
Committee: Ways and Means
Position: UNFAVORABLE

Dear Committee,

We are writing to request an UNFAVORABLE vote of HB0785. This bill is a COMPLETE overreach of the state of Maryland to:

1. **ELIMINATE LOCAL CONTROL** and decision making from school districts in Maryland. This is why we elect local school board members.
2. Take away parental and community involvement in the decision making of local school districts.
3. Seeks to **WITHHOLD FUNDING** from school districts for not complying with the state.
4. Eliminate the purpose of having a **LIBRARIAN OR MEDIA SPECIALIST**.

This bill is really about the SEXUALLY EXPLICIT CONTENT that has been found in school libraries. The state is attempting to take away any local control over the content and selection of library materials in schools. This bill is attempting to do exactly what it says should not be done: *A LIBRARY SHOULD NOT PROHIBIT OR REMOVE MATERIAL FROM ITS CATALOGUE BECAUSE OF PARTISAN OR DOCTRINAL DISAPPROVAL*. SEXUALLY EXPLICIT CONTENT has NO PLACE in our public school libraries. Period.

The local school board should have the final say in books that are approved and removed, NOT THE STATE.

We humbly request your **UNFAVORABLE** vote on this bill for Maryland families and children.

Sincerely,

Tara and Matthew Thompson
Parents of 3 school-aged children in Maryland and lifetime residents of Baltimore County