



February 19, 2024

RE: HB785

Dear Ways and Means Committee:

Just a few years ago, the Delmarva Parent Teacher Coalition (DPTC) was established by parents and teachers due to the many violations, abuses, and attacks on parental rights and the local control of schools and curriculum by the State of Maryland. Representing thousands of parents and teachers across the state, we have collectively discovered the systematic integrations and obstructive tactics designed to encroach on our rights and freedoms.

HB785 “Freedom to Read Act” is a bill designed to remove local control from elected school boards for state-controlled media centers in our schools. A school media center or school library is not a public library, but a classroom where students receive instruction, select, and receive learning materials. The fact that a HB785 was created was for the purpose of one thing – to allow unrestricted access to obscene materials by minors at school.

We have no issue with the content of public libraries, but having obscene materials in schools is willfully negligent. The question is, why are legislators so obsessed with sexualizing children that they would have to go to the extent to craft such a bill, deceitfully implying that children currently do not have the freedom to read?

The “freedom to read” has nothing to do with adults providing obscene materials to minor children, which we currently have obscenity laws that prohibit obscene content provided to minor children and defined as illegal under Maryland State Criminal Law Code Annotated §11-201, § 11-202, § 11-203 and 18 U.S.C. § 1470.

HB785 creates an exception without regard to the current state and federal laws that are designed to protect children. Instead, HB785 intends to violate these laws, exploit children, and subvert parental and local authority under the guise of “Freedom.”

The DPTC opposes HB785.

Darren Lombardo, Director  
Delmarva Parent Teacher Coalition