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Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#/0282 - POSITION: UNFAVORABLE

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

TO: Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony against HB#/0282, Public Schools - Sexually Explicit Materials - Prohibited in Libraries and Media Centers

This bill is another that seems to be supporting the conservative's political agenda for control of education. Because I am offended by something then you have no right to it, the Lord says I'm the only one that counts when it comes to what your child should be permitted to read or view. This bill violates MY right as a parent to let my child have the choice in consultation with me.

There are three excellent reasons to oppose this bill.

Parents may control what their own children read, but don't have a right to restrict what books are available to other people.

Parents who don't like specific books can have their kids opt out of an assignment without infringing on the rights of others.

Many frequently challenged books help people get a better idea of the world and their place in it.

Robie H. Harris, author of frequently challenged children's books including *It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing up, Sex, and Sexual Health*, stated, "I think these books look at the topics, the concerns, the worry, the fascination that kids have today... It's the world in which they're living."

Books are a portal to different life experiences and reading encourages empathy and social-emotional development.

One study found that reading J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, which is frequently challenged for religious concerns about witchcraft, "improved attitudes" about immigrants, homosexuals, and refugees.

This bill is unnecessary and only serves to respond to a political agenda in which a small group wants to control the majority and suppress anything that troubles them for everyone else. **I respectfully urge this committee to return an unfavorable report on HB#/0282.**