

Opposition (UNF) to House Bill 0282
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Dear Members of the General Assembly,

My name is Devin Krol and I am resident in district 11B. I am writing this testimony in opposition of the proposed SB282 bill that would ban books in schools. This bill is incredibly vague and dangerous; it does not define what is “age appropriate” or what is considered “sexually explicit.” SB282 is a poorly veiled attack on the LGBTQ+ community of Maryland. According to the Trevor Project LGBTQ+ children “are more than four times as likely to attempt suicide than their peers,” limiting the access of books will make LGBTQ+ students unsafe and potentially lead to bullying. Would a picture book depicting a family with two dads be deemed “age-inappropriate?” This vague language coupled with the idea of banning books at all is terrifying to me as Jewish resident and member of Jews United for Justice. My paternal grandparents settled in Maryland after surviving the horrors of the Holocaust. The Holocaust, which began by banning books, has been banned from being taught in states like Florida and Texas, is this the sort of company we as Marylanders want to keep? Could the introduction of this bill eventually lead to other bills banning books about Holocaust, slavery, or other difficult historical topics? Is learning about history age-appropriate?

This bill is a slippery slope and at the end the ones who suffer the most will be our children. Additionally, SB282 is in contradiction of the Maryland Freedom to Read Act which states “a library should not prohibit or remove material from its catalogue because of partisan, ideological, or religious disapproval.” Limiting access to information and censoring education is a major disservice to the children of Maryland. Heinrich Hein wrote “wherever they burn books,

they will also, in the end, burn human beings,” I urge you all to vote against SB282 and continue to protect Maryland students’ right to learn.

Thank you for taking my testimony into consideration,

Devin Krol