

Ways and Means Committee - House Bill 282 - UNFAVORABLE

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee;

I strongly encourage you to give House Bill 282 an UNFAVORABLE report.

House Bill 282 does not define what constitutes "graphic," "obscene," "sexual activity," or "age-appropriate." Given the Republican agenda of erasing LGBTQ+ people from society, and given the insistence by groups like "Moms for Liberty" that school-aged children are too young to understand that not everyone is heterosexual or cisgender, and that even mentioning LGBTQ+ people is sexualizing children, this bill can and will be used to deny the very existence of LGBTQ+ people.

School librarians and teachers are perfectly capable of determining what is and is not age-appropriate for children. Removing resources that include LGBTQ+ people from the schools is a way to invalidate and discriminate against LGBTQ+ people. School personnel are morally obligated to provide materials that include LGBTQ+ people, just as they are morally obligated to provide materials that include Black and Brown people. Parents who oppose such materials should pull their children out of the public schools and either homeschool them or enroll them in private schools that reflect their biases. In a time when "obscene" is a word used for the simple actions of a same-sex couple holding hands, or a transgender person wearing the clothing of their gender rather than what's usually expected based on their genitalia, we can't take the chance of passing House Bill 282.

Please give House Bill 282 an unfavorable report, and trust school personnel to keep inappropriate materials out of the classrooms and libraries. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Debi Jasen
Pasadena, MD