

Testimony to Oppose Maryland House Bill 282: "Prohibition on Instructional Materials with Sexually Explicit Content"

To: Members of the House Ways and Means Committee

Date: 1/21/2025

Subject: Opposition to HB 282 - Education - Prohibition on Instructional Materials with Sexually Explicit Content

Hi, my name is Cooper Speach, I am 14 years old and I am an 8th grader at St. Anne's School of Annapolis, I also identify as bisexual. I am speaking in opposition to banning "sexually explicit" material from school libraries, House Bill 282. I feel that instead of banning the books, people instead put a more visible age rating on the book and keep said books separate from the other books. I feel that this would be a more meaningful compromise of both sides. I also believe that by banning those books you are getting rid of the opportunity for students like me to learn, empathize and feel my connection and representation with the LGBTQAI+ community.

I am not saying that I want there to be sexually graphic literature in school libraries because that is not something that children should be exposed too. I feel this bill will also ban things that are seen as normal with straight couples like holding hands, kissing or even being together, which is seen as sexually explicit in queer couples. I also think that by banning these books you are telling children that being in a relationship with someone from the same gender should be frowned upon (which is horrible) and that you should only like someone of the opposite gender. This limits a child's willingness and ability to express who they really are because they think that doing so is wrong. This silences them and makes them feel unwanted and it tells them that they do not deserve to love or be loved.

I hope that you read this and decide to reject House Bill no.282 as it separates our nation and alienates the LGBTQAI+ community. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,  
Cooper Speach