

Comment Report

Government Oversight

Date: 02/20/2023

Time: 05:00 PM

Location: RM 103, Sup. Ct. Chamber

Name: Ruth Henderson

Comment: I was a public school teacher for over 40 years and had the experience several times when parents were not particularly happy with the materials that I used in the classroom. I listened to their concerns and, when appropriate would be able to provide alternative materials for their child. This is what teachers do. This is what schools do. There are procedures in place to process these types of requests. But, this did not mean that ALL of the students in my classes had to use the alternative materials instead of what I provided. I understand that there are some parents and other concerned individuals who do not like every book that is available in their school library. No problem. They just have to request that their child not be allowed to check that book out. When you say that ALL children should be denied access, that then is Book Banning. Most Americans oppose book bans. You will find yourself on the wrong side of history when you ban books. I also understand that you are not allowing individuals that oppose these bans to speak at your hearings. This seems strange that you do not want to hear from constituents that do not agree with book banning. You need to hear from ALL stakeholders.

Name: Carolyn Roseberry

Comment: Please please please DO NOT ban books. It is a terrible idea. As a retired teacher, I know children learn so much by being able to read a variety of books.

Name: Andrea McIlwee

Comment: The current wave of bookbanning initiatives is happening as a coordinated effort. In the subcommittee meeting 2 weeks ago, all of the parents who were invited to speak were members of the national organization Moms for Liberty. Their goal is the destruction of public schools. Open your eyes! This is not about the books. Moms for Liberty has openly admitted that they want to destroy public education. Here is a quote from Polk County Chapter President Jenn Turner from Johnston, IA: Public Ed was created by the federal government to destroy the United States of America. There is other evidence that this attack on books is a tool to achieve a much larger goal. We cannot allow this to happen.

Name: Tiffany DeBow

Comment: I am asking the state of Iowa to not take away parents' liberty to determine for themselves what legal material their child has access to at school. All the books currently in schools do not meet the state legal standard for indecent material, despite the select passages taken out of context that people have a problem with. I am perfectly capable of contacting my school to find out what is available to my child if I am concerned. I am perfectly capable of parenting my kids through a conflict with our family values. I am perfectly capable of working with the school & using systems that are available to shield my kids from any concerning subject matters that I do not want them to encounter. Every parent in the state is capable of this & the ones who are pushing for this simply either a) want to be able to decide for everyone else or b) want the state & the schools to do the work of parenting for them. The state of Iowa & the schools are not responsible for parenting my child, especially since this movement is the work of a group of people who have the state governments ear. We do not coparent with the Moms for Liberty.

- Name:** Terry Henderson
- Comment:** Republican book banning throughout the USA is a fascist step toward the destruction of public education. Uneducated voters are easier to deceive and willingly vote against their own best interests. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fascism>
- Name:** Rick Phillips
- Comment:** Something has gone terribly wrong in the education system when we need to have a book review process. Apparently, that's not working. It seems the only important educational value today is discovering what your pronoun is with this insidious gender identity craze. Teaching gender identity is not education. It is the gateway to instability and fast track to an unfulfilled life. No, we're not about banning books, which in the first place is a weak and pathetic defense. What we want is to protect the innocence of minor children. Many parents are appalled by the insolent behavior of adult faculty they have entrusted their children. Why do you want to open children to harmful subject matter at such an innocent age? Is that really a hill to die on? Most are saying quit sexualizing children with kiddie porn. They can read adult material when they become adults, so put your adult books on the top shelf and not the bottom. That's the process!
- Name:** Courtney Collier
- Comment:** Thank you for holding this and the previous hearing on the obscene books found in many Iowa schools. It's important that parents are treated with respect when they are concerned about their child's education. It is clear that this was not the case when these obscene books were objected to by parents in Iowa. As a state we need to be asking how these obscene books are being curated by school district employees with taxpayer dollars? We also need to ask why these obscene books are okay for the school library or English class curriculum but the same content is blocked by school firewalls for technology while at school?? This is not book banning or internet censorship; it's common sense restriction of obscene content while at school. The process for objection to materials was not unbiased nor was it timely. It also required students to be involved which meant they would have to be exposed to the obscene books being challenged. The state needs to adopt a clear policy on obscenity in K-12 school materials and media. The IDOE needs to take a bold position on the education standards for our state's children, as currently anything goes. Exposing minors to obscene content at school will not serve the future of Iowa well. It should be noted that the opposition to this subject matter, is hate filled and openly calling for and threatening to doxx and cancel the people who support this legislative action by contacting their employers.
- Name:** Kathy Geronzin
- Comment:** I oppose any laws restricting what books can be in school libraries. The most banned book in the whole world is the Holy Bible. Books are being singled out by having passages read out of context. And the legislature should stand up to protect the rights of students to health education and education that speaks to the dangers of contracting STDs. Educators have the responsibility to attempt to meet the needs of all students. Let them especially when those students are transgender, LGBTQ, or nonwhite. Since before 1981 Iowa public schools have required that teachers have multicultural nonsexist education. Let's not go back in time. Fascist governments ban books and restrict curriculum. Don't be Fascists.
- Name:** Lisa Hughes
- Comment:** Please do not take this action to ban books across the entire state based on 1 person not liking a book. The parents have the ability to work with their own school on not having a book they don't agree with available to their child. When they want to limit books for all children then they are trying to force their beliefs on all of us. Removing books that may not be in line with your own individual thinking only narrows the mindsets of the next generation. We need them to be able to read about cultures that

they don't experience, religions they aren't familiar with and be able to understand that not everyone has the same thoughts or perspectives as they do. We should be encouraging our youth to explore and expand what they know instead of living in a small isolated bubble in this large world. I want my child to question what he hears on tv or reads in the news or even what he hears from his counterparts. He needs to be able to appreciate what struggles others have had, how he can be empathetic to their situations, that not everyone has the same viewpoint or experiences as him and to learn what has happened in the history of the world. We read several of the books that are being threatened for banning when we were in school. Were you traumatized by Ann Frank's Diary or To Kill A Mockingbird or were your eyes opened to some of the unjust things that have taken place? The next generation is stronger than we give them credit for and need the resources available to them to find ways to make this world better for us all.

Name: Patty SeregAlexander

Comment: Thank you for investigating the process of the reconsideration committee. The process is broken, the people who serve on the committee are chosen by the administrators. The committee is made up of teachers, librarians and students which outnumber the community members. The system doesn't work because it is mob rule, which is essentially, the fox is protecting the hen house. The process is subjective, not objective to what is appropriate for the instruction of children to be better prepared for their future. We need an objective standardized moral rubric of what is appropriate for school libraries and classrooms. This is about improving public education, it is not about book banning. These books are still available through many other sources.

Name: Mandy Gilbert

Comment: Thank you for holding this hearing about the many flaws in the curriculum reconsideration process that is biased by design. Now with the mob rule, doxing and multiple agencies that sweep in to either protest or file a lawsuit, the process needs further examination. Truth is these books were brought in by bulk thanks to the agenda pushers of the American Library Association. If librarians were doing their jobs in truly curating the libraries, parents would not have to do their job for them. Instead of correcting an error with the age inappropriateness of these books, in most cases they get defended. As a result, parents have lost all trust with the school districts. If these books were never allowed access when we were school aged, why on earth would they be now? Unfortunately politics are downstream of the culture and now culture has lost all standards of morality and deem porn as a healthy way to explore sexuality, according to the book Let's Talk About It, that was found in Iowa schools. Finding a way for transparency so parents can be aware of the content in books, through a rating system or clearly removed when the pictures are so graphic that superintendents remove them on their own without going through a process. Hope you will ask these superintendents why they removed obscene material and why not the librarian? Also curious if they feel comfortable reading the excerpts from books like Push, The Bluest Eye that they have in their libraries and even teachers select for classroom instruction? Unfortunate this issue has created party lines instead of #peopleoverpolitics in protecting our children on age appropriate material.

Name: Erin H

Comment: Thank you for having this hearing. The attempts by people in favor of keeping porn in school is nothing more than a manipulative tactic to try and convince people that there is an actual book ban. People can acquire any type or material they want from a variety of sources other than public school. Parents do not want their children being subjected to harmful material at school. Pornographic material/ pictures should have no place in school. Many people have said if you don't like it just opt your kid out. It is not that simple. I opted my kid out of one particular book and it did no good. The book was still used for classroom instruction/ discussion. He still had to have conversations about it and heard all the content contained in the book. Opting out

not little to no good. He personally thought what was discussed, was disgusting. Im not sending my kids to public school to be repulsed by graphic sexual content.

Name: Julie Scott

Comment: Thank you Legislators for bringing this very important and critical issue to review. I agree wholeheartedly with protecting our childrens innocent minds from obscenity and pornography in school. (Cant even believe we have to question this!) However, this is NOT about banning books as many are crying out about loudly... but this IS about age appropriate books for minor children. There are certainly good books available for schools and school libraries that can teach to a child without having to expose them to books that include pictures and descriptions of sexual intercourse, and including with same sex partners, blow jobs, adults having sex with children, rape, etc. This is absolutely absurd and horrifying that these books are available to children in schools. How did these books ever get into schools?? Thats where the process needs begin and to be reviewed , then corrected. Is pornography okay with the American Library Association? If so, please look at how this can be stopped by not allowing books with obscenities allowed to enter the schools. I am strongly FOR any law(s) needed to protect children and their innocent minds to stay innocent. It has been proven that children who are exposed to such material can and have developed damaging issues with sexuality as they grow. Lets allow children to be children. Please pass laws to protect children from books that are not good education.

Name: Roberta Gamble

Comment: Regarding the house government oversight hearing Monday at 5 PM.,. Specifically, I ask the legislators to require k12 schools to restrict obscene books the same way they currently restrict obscene content on the internet at school. Anyone who says this is banning books is not being honest as these books a are still be available outside of school libraries. Also, I do not want obscene books being purchased with taxpayer funds and placed in our school libraries and classrooms I watched the first committee meeting and heard the testimony of the mothers that went through the process to get books reviewed. There is bias in this review boards, and it needs overhauled!Thank you for bringing this to committee and for you consideration.

Name: Ashley V

Comment: I am writing in support of removing obscene materials from school libraries, all school libraries. This is not a ban on books, but a stand on not allowing very disturbing and inappropriate books in schools. Just as the kids aren't allowed to look up porn on their devices, they shouldn't be able to go to their school library and see it. Students and parents are able to view these books on their own time, and on their own dime. We should not be allowing these perverse books, and definitely not funding this! The "banning" talk is a stretch. It's concerning we have to plead not to have pornographic and obscene materials passed around our schools. Also, the process for reporting these books by parents really needs looked at. Protect our kids. Thank you!

Name: Paula Campbell

Comment: Thank you legislators for listening to the concerns of parents. I dont understand why there would be those who would want our children to be subjected to porn in the first place and call it book banning when concerned parents want it taken out of schools. Books that teach on how to have sex is not the education they need in the school system, there were no such books in school when I was young, so why would it be book banning now. This is harmful to them and it takes away from the real academics of learning.

Name: Anne Salamon

Comment: How appropriate? Ironic? That the committee that is considering banning books, also does not want to allow, that is, it "bans" citizens who oppose this bill from speaking about it!!And it isn't even the Education Committee that is proposing this.Why is it

that far right groups can be so vocal about THEIR rights, yet have no qualms about denying others' rights? Why can Moms for Liberty demand "LIBERTY", yet have no qualms about running roughshod over the liberties of others? Because one parent in NW Iowa doesn't like a book is no reason that that book should be banned across the state! What happened to local control? Each district has processes and protocols in place to handle parent concerns over their child reading certain books. They also have in place processes for reviewing certain books. It is unreasonable to impose standards from one community, from ONE PARENT, on all others. That is authoritarianism. It is Fascism. Or will you also ban The Third Reich from school libraries, for fear that students will connect what is happening here with what happened in Germany in the 1930's? Oh, and don't forget The Book Thief, for those on a lower reading level. This is a dangerous path Republican legislators are starting to go down. You are appealing to an extremist base at the expense of the majority of Iowans. Apparently "Our liberties we prize and our rights we will maintain" applies only to a select few. Do not send this proposal on. Reject bending to the pressure of extremist special interest groups and respect the rights of ALL Iowans to decide what is best for THEIR OWN children!

Name: Sharon Kerry

Comment: The movie Basic Instinct has been banned from school libraries probably thanks to right wing nut jobs like Moms for Liberty. The nudity in this movie is very brief and when seen in context adds to the tension in this excellent crime drama. It has excellent artistic value and is a well done film and all 14 year old boys should be able to view it if they consent to.. at least thats what my 14 year old boy told me.

Name: Andy Sutton

Comment: I am a mom and a high school teacher. As a parent I fully understand being concerned about the books your child reads. Parents do need to aware of what their kids are reading. But not by censoring books for other peoples kids. If you dont want your kid to read a particular book, then a parent should take responsibility for discussing with their kid why that book may not be appropriate for them. Whats appropriate for my kid may not be for someone else. If this is really about parents rights, then my parental rights should be respected as well. Its a slippery slope when we allow some parents, by law, to start telling other parents how to raise their kids and what they should exposed to. I want my kids to see themselves in the literature they read. Many books that are being targeting are indeed lgbtq books. I have a nonbinary 16 year old. They need to know that they are not some taboo identity not be discussed. As a teacher, I believe we should be teaching books that our relevant to lives and experiences are students have in their diverse lives. I believe all students in public schools should be able to see themselves somewhere within the school system whether that is in who we hire as educators or what we teach in the class room. Literature is about developing empathy for those who are different from us, not about isolating one demographics perception of reality. We need books that represent real events from our history as a nation, not to make white students feel guilty, but to to help all students feel empathy for people who are different from them. Students need to understand why our society has the problems it does, so they can use their critical thinking skills to find better solutions than what our current governor and legislative majority is coming up with. We have an expansive and beautifully diverse nation, and we should honor all humans as worthy of dignity and respect, including people of color and the lgbtq community. Book banning would allow a specific group of parents to challenge whatever they see as unfit for their children, without regard for the damage it may inflict on others. Books are a way for students to explore a diverse array of ideas and experiences that convey the reality of our nation and of the world. We should be encouraging these ideas, not causing further oppression of marginalized populations.

Name: Harry Ehrlich

I support the proposal of preventing placement and also removing obscene materials

Comment: from our school libraries, that includes all school libraries. What is proposed is not a ban on books, but a proposal to not allow inappropriate and overtly sexually sensitive books in K 12 schools. I believe in most schools kids aren't allowed to look up porn on their electronic devices so they shouldn't be able to receive sexually sensitive books or magazines in their school library. We should not be allowing perverse books to be provided or available in schools to our youth, especially without parental input or approval. I find it difficult to believe that the Legislature should have to enact a law to direct school officials to not have pornographic and obscene materials available in our schools. Please take careful action to safeguard our children.

Name: Amy Dea

Comment: I am grateful that you are looking for the truth in what is going on in our public schools. No one can tell a parent how the books got on the shelf. No one follows any standards and in fact, they have proven that they have no standards. These sexually explicit and pervasively vulgar books are being passed off as useful educational materials. That is unacceptable! We all know it. It is time to reign in this nonsense! We all know the truth! These books are not age appropriate! Put them back in the adult bookstores! We need to protect Iowa students from this material! They are the future of our communities and our country!

Name: Oliver Bardwell

Comment: We have to guard the doorway to our children's developing and impressionable minds. There is no place for the type of obscenity and pornography that the ALA has ushered into our public schools. Movies have ratings, music has ratings and video games have ratings. The internet and devices connected to it in our schools have safe guards and filters to protect our children from adult content. Please create objective ratings for these books and an objective process 1. for screening books and educational materials before they are allowed into the school or school library 2. for removing anything that may have slipped through 3. for allowing appropriate access based on rating and age and finally 4. for prosecuting any adult who knowingly exposes a child to obscene material. The IDOE doesn't seem to be interested in protecting Iowa's children from obscene and pornographic material so now it's up to you.

Name: Pamela S.

Comment: I'm a grown adult with 5 grown children and 13 grandchildren. I'm obviously not a prude who knows nothing about sexuality and wants to keep older children from knowing all the functions of their body. However, providing that information in a scientific manner actually teaches them what they need to know, without causing discomfort while reading about odd, if not bizarre, encounters between two children, of the same sex or not, or the scenario of a man sneaking into a child's room and sexually abusing them. I am not opposed whatsoever to teaching children that they should never be forced into an uncomfortable or unwanted situation sexually, and that they should ask for help when that happens to them. I am opposed to stories that illicit arousal in the reader, simply because that is the body's natural response to reading about these encounters. It is learning of these scenarios while a child is developing sexually that can cause them to desire inappropriate sexual gratification (objectifying others for their own pleasure with no regard for the appropriateness of age or gender or authority over their victim). These books are for that purpose, to cause arousal and interest, and that is considered pornography. Those who place these books in schools should be considered to be breaking the law. All other types of media have ratings in place to protect children. Are there Rrated videos in the school? Do the children have access to Rrated websites via the school's computers and tablets? They shouldn't, and the same is true for the books that have been read in school board meetings all over the state and country. Some have said portions have been read out of context. There is plenty of information out of context for it to be clear that the material is highly inappropriate. The parents who want their children to

be able to read those books should buy them and keep them on their own bookshelves. That is their right as parents. The schools are always complaining about how parents don't care about their children's education, how they aren't involved enough. Well, parents are now getting involved, and the schools don't like it. Get used to it! This issue, and the issue of pushing the latest gender fluidity craze on innocent kids and messing them up for life are just two of the reasons parents love the new School Choice bill! Get back to the basics of education or you'll see more and more children being pulled out of public education and going to private or home schooling.

Name: Anita Hoch

Comment: I am at awe that we are having to set a law up to protect children our children from Pornographic material. We have shows that arent allowed to be watched by our young children through ratings and it is up to the parents discretion for this to be allowed in their homes. The role of our teachers and schools is to teach are children to be able to read do math and know the proud history of America. Can we focus on these areas and quit grooming our children. I hear we are free but are we? As a parent I choose how to teach my children on issues to do with sexual matters. We rob our children the innocense of being young. I was a tomboy when I was young but not once did it ever enter my mind to want to change from a girl to a boy just because I enjoyed playing with cars fishing etc These matters of allowing these books cause great confusion to our children of issues they are yet not able to understand due to the maturity of their innocent minds. If you choose to want your children to read these books then purchase them and allow them to read them. They should not be allowed to pushed in our schools and on our children. This is not the place. Our children our precious lets let them know they are loved and protected and let them be kids. I am voting that these books be banned. Teach what needs to be taught so that our children can function in society with the tools they need to hold jobs and be successful human beings. When they mature and become adults then they have the freedom and their free will how they chose to live.

Name: Sandy Wilson

Comment: Citizen Engagement is IN FAVOR of removing books that depict sex acts, describe sex acts and use obscene language from our public schools. We charge our schools with helping parents raise good American citizens. The books depicted in the several subcommittees and hearings this session do not serve that purpose. Schools must return to teaching the core educational subjects and refrain from taking on the role of therapist, family counselor, doctor, etc.. We are not in favor of what is being falsely described by teachers, former teachers, educators, counselors, therapists, parents, etc., as book banning. If a parent wants that information in their childs hands, they are more than welcome to buy it for their personal use or obtain those books from a public library. For most students, schools are one size fits all. The information in books depicted during subcommittees and hearings this session is best left for discussions between children and their parents who are intimately familiar with their students ability to digest such information. It does not require being a teacher, former teacher, educator in any capacity, counselor, therapist, etc. to understand what is best for our children. Citizen Engagement has many of these professionals in membership as well who understand PARENTS are the first line of defense to what is and what is NOT acceptable for their children. This fact should be acknowledged by ALL of our legislators by supporting their constituents and legislation that remove books and materials that depict sex acts, describe sex acts and use obscene language from the public schools.

Name: Carrie Wright

Comment: Thank you for holding this hearing. Clearly the process in place for reconsideration requests is not robust enough to handle submissions that contain obscene material. The definition applied to the material is potentially controversial instead of using the standard based on the definition of "obscene material, as provided in Iowa Code

728.1(5). The review committees are not impartial, and have little chance to be considering the selection process is controlled by the school. Also by having minors sit on the reconsideration committee, if the material was ever classified as obscene, the school would then be in violation of 728.2. Because of this corner they paint themselves into, there is no choice but to approve these books so they aren't guilty of dissemination of obscene material.

Name: Crista Carlile

Comment: I have been a high school teacher and K12 administrator in public education for 23 years. I am in multiple preK12 classrooms weekly. I urge those in positions of power and decision making to spend time in schools and classrooms. What you will see is committed teachers doing their absolute best to create safe and inclusive spaces for students. When classroom materials or library materials are not consistent with a parent's wishes for their child, parents may request an alternative assignment or material. This has been the case throughout my time and experience in both urban and suburban schools in the Des Moines metro. We have continually made improvements to our processes in light of concerns expressed. For example, providing a list of required reading in a syllabus is current best practice. Providing an online catalog of library materials is also best practice. Following board policies is an ethical obligation for all school employees and board members. Improving board policy by following the legallyvetted processes defined by school boards is always an option when the board policy is shown to need improvement. Changing board policy is a public process, whereby any member of the public can make comments and concerns known to their locally elected school board officials. I implore the Iowa legislature to continue to keep these processes and decisions in the hands of local school boards and their constituents. Please stop the fearmongering and rumors of what is happening in schools by actually being present in schools. Please let local school boards, whose members are elected and held responsible at the local level, determine what is best for their schools. Thank you for your time.

Name: Heidi Washington

Comment: I have taken the mandatory reporter training every 5 years for the last 20 years. This training states that exposing children to porn/explicite material is child abuse. We should not be offering this type of material in school. If you can't read it out loud to a classroom or read it out loud to a group of people without feeling embarrassed, we shouldn't be offering it to students. We block all of this on our school internet filters, and so should be in school libraries. I would like to see an overall content ban. If they can't read it on the internet at school, they shouldn't be able to read it in a book at school.

Name: Brandy W

Comment: There is no place in our schools for sexualized content. I believe the folks defending these books have mostly not seen or heard what is actually in the 70 or so books that are in our Iowa schools with a book rating for adults. The people that want to expose their children to sexual adult content could do so by purchasing the book for themselves. It should be illegal to expose children to visuals of oral sex, graphic descriptions of rape & incest without knowledge from their parents. I would certainly question the reasoning for any adult to expose any child to this type of content. What is the goal?

Name: Jenn Turner

Comment: Thank you for taking the time to learn about the process of the book reconsideration process in districts. Most of us realize this is an attempt to understand why parents are bringing certain books before committees and the policies in place by each district involved. Most of us also realize that if a bill goes to committee on these books in question, than all sides will have the opportunity to voice their concern. So, we appreciate you taking the time to understand the frustrations of parents that have gone through the process, and tonight, the districts will have the opportunity to share

their thoughts and why their policies are in place. Thank you for taking the time.

Name: Jeff Fahrman

Comment: I fully support this bill. It is unconscionable that we are even debating whether kids should have access to sexually explicit and obscene reading materials in public schools. School should be the one place where parents can feel comfortable knowing their kids won't have access to such graphic content. They shouldn't have to jump through the hoops of a local objection process, particularly when there are many of parents who won't bother. If such materials are acceptable for students to access, then why do schools even restrict what websites students have access to on their school Chromebooks? There is no logical argument for this. This is not banning books or prohibiting free speech. This is simply common sense. I hope that Republicans will do the right thing and protect our youth from pornographic materials.

Name: Amanda Mac

Comment: I am in support of this hearing. I find it concerning that when it comes to books, we throw out all guidelines on whether the reading material is appropriate for the age group. I am in full support of having content that is mature (pornographic, erotic, or with step by step instructions on sexual positions) removed from our schools, and left in our public libraries for parents to decide whether or not that material is appropriate for their children. It's disturbing that our tax dollars are being used to fill our school libraries with what can only be described as pornography. I ask you to please ensure that our children get an education that will help them flourish as an adult and that does not include books that encourage minor children to research kink in the internet with like minded people such as was the case of a book found in Northwest Waukegan which has since been removed. We shouldn't have to fight the schools to keep books that give step by step instructions to minor children on how to safely send nude pictures. This shouldn't be a battle parents have to fight in the schools. Please restrict obscene books in grade K12 and leave them available in public libraries. That is a reasonable compromise and one I would hope resonate with those on both sides of the aisle.

Name: Amanda Mac

Comment: In my previous post it should say: how to safely send NUDE pictures. That material is completely irrelevant to anything that resembles education, and seems like something only a pedophile would encourage children to read.

Name: Catherine Nelson

Comment: Banning books only contributes to further brain drain in our State. If you were readers yourselves, you would know that reading about gay people doesn't make you want to be gay, just like reading about pirates, doesn't make you want to be a pirate. DO NOT BAN BOOKS! I don't want to be from a state that thinks ignorance is a good thing.

Name: Jill Johnston

Comment: As a mom, I always wanted my children to read everything, this way we could discuss what they didn't understand. I always knew what they were reading, that is my job as their parent, not a law, not a government official, or a group that thinks they know better. A book on a shelf in a library only exposes the student to the title and the author. That is it. I would like to share my experience with Moms of Liberty. Amy Dea is the leader of Moms of Liberty Carroll County. I then myself at a school board meeting for Carroll Community School District. I was there to talk about books that have impacted me. Amy Dea also spoke at this meeting. She saw that FFA students were there to present to the board. She even asked their instructor to remove them from the room. She trusted the instructor to make that decision, which I found interesting because she doesn't trust educators to make decisions on books. I watched as the instructor talked to the students and explained what she must have

told him because he pointed to her. The students remained in the room. Different people (including a CCSD student) presented and when it was Amy Deas turn to present, I figured that she would say something like I can not present what I wanted to tonight because there are students here. She DID NOT. She said, I asked the teacher to remove the students but they are still here. She went on to read all of the passages in the book Sold by Patricia McCormick that she deemed inappropriate for students to read on their own with their parent's permission. Yet, she read these passages in front of high school students WITHOUT context and WITHOUT parental permission.

Name: Lois Taber

Comment: It doesnt make sense to expose children to pornographic or sexual material until they become adults and can decide for themselves. Children can not drink, vote, or be jailed as adults until a legal age, so why is there such a big push to now treat them as adults educating (?) them until their reasoning and logic have formed in their brains?!Public libraries carry a variety of such material if parents with their children are so inclined to view. Parents are the primary educators of their children. School educators need to stick with the basic learning subjects.

Name: Mark Brown

Comment: "Burning books" is such a redherring argument to this bill. This bill accurately restricts reading from young eyes as to maintain innocence and restrict public education to rudimentary fundamentals: reading, writing, and arithmetic. Nothing in this bill prevents parents from privately furnishing such materials to their own children under their own roofs, in the privacy of their own homes. Why the movie and gaming industries have such ratings as PG, PG13, R, etc., is precisely to warn parents and adults that such movies, documentaries, games, etc., are not appropriate for younger audiences!! We restrict purchase of pornographic materials to those under the age of 18; why then would one not expect the same for the 'book' industry as it pertains to public education libraries and classrooms?!?!Not only should such materials remain out of our school libraries and classrooms, but a process to quickly review such questionable materials for 'adult' content should be included (without minors being involved).

Name: Kris Mesicek

Comment: I am pleased to see the committee making the effort to hear from School Board members and Superintendents. I am disappointed that you have not yet given the opportunity for parents, students, teachers, and librarians to provide testimony that reflects the perspectives of the vast majority of Iowans. I anticipate that the testimony from school boards and superintendents will give you a much more accurate picture of how the Reconsideration Process works in a fair, equitable and thoughtful process for determining the literacy merit and value of a wide variety of books being made available to our young people to give them a broad window to the world in which they will live as adults. It is NOT broken. In most cases, it is based on the First Amendment Rights of students and legal precedence established by Supreme Court decisions. At no point is any parent prevented from exercising their right to prevent their child from reading any book to which they may object. Legislation should be based upon facts, science, research, the rule of law, and Iowa values and principles such as majority rule, local control, and the Rule of Law. It is frustrating to see terms such as pornography and obscene being bandied about with no clarification or legal definition. The books being called into questions. A book may contain explicit passages that contribute to the story, but this does not diminish the literary value of the book. Please do not cave to the orchestrated efforts and propaganda of groups like Moms For Liberty that are backed by dark money and big money donors like Charles Koch who do not even live in Iowa. Please respect and represent ALL Iowans and ALL students by keeping the decisions regarding school books with local school boards and local parents. Please do NOT give a small group the power to restrict access to books for ALL students.

Name: Jan Slick

Comment: WHY would ANYONE push for obscene materials to be included in our school libraries and classrooms? With centuries of classic books available and so little time to expose these thirsty young minds, why on earth would we waste classtime exposing them to oexplicit sexual content or expose them to it in our school libraries? Why the searching and insistance of procuring these materials????What has happened to a parent's right to protect THEIR children...those rights are being negated!Any parents who truly feel their children NEED that type of education should buy the books for their HOME Library or check them out at the public library. Schools are NOT the place for them.This is not book banning....you have the choice to buy or borrow anything you want.

Name: Carolyn Uhlenhake Walker

Comment: As a retired school teacher, I am asking you as politicians to not interfere with the educational process of choosing children's literature!

Name: Jill Majeres

Comment: I'm against unilaterally taking books out of school libraries just because a small minority in Des Moines make enough noise. School districts already have processes in place to address parental concerns. The control should remain with the schools.

Name: Michael Trenkamp

Comment: Many libraries have alternative media sections where DVDs can be checked out. I assume everyone is fine with school libraries not having R rated movies that contain explicit content. Does that mean that movies are banned?

Name: Concerned Citizen

Comment: There are parents who may not be comfortable with their children being exposed to books that deal with diverse topics or that may contain explicit descriptions within the larger context of the story. These parents already have a variety of options to exercise their parents rights. 1. They can request that the school staff assign their student a different book to read for class assignments. 2. They can request that school staff not make a specific book available to their student. 3. They can read and discuss the book with their son or daughter and share their views on the content of the book and learn their son or daughters perspectives and questions. 4. They can challenge the specific book and request it go through the Reconsideration Process. 5. They can accept the decision of the Reconsideration process or appeal it to the local school board of their school district. 6. Reynolds and the Legislature have provided an additional option: enroll their child in a private school using taxpayer dollars. I support parents exercising their rights to take advantage of any and/or all of these options. What I can NOT support is a small group of parents demanding to limit the rights of the majority of students and parents in providing access to a wide variety of books and literature. Since when has America become a land of minority rule?

Name: Julie Zaugg

Comment: Schools have procedures in place for parents to request their child be given an alternate assignment if they object to a book. Our district has had this procedure in place at least since the 1970's. That is how it should be. If a school does not have such a policy, they need to write one.The suggestion that if one school chooses to remove a book ALL schools should have to remove the book is ridiculous. What happened to local control? One school should NOT be able to force the entire state to pull books from their shelves. Let the parents of each district work through the process if they feel a need. Allowing one to rule all is not democracy.

Name: Brice Hughes

Comment: Banning books is what fascists do to control what their subjects may see. Anyone

who is afraid of an idea in a book is not afraid of the book, they are afraid of people thinking. This is a stupid idea that can only lead to evil. Just because one person doesn't like what's in a book is no excuse to prevent others from reading that book.

Name: Laura Carlson

Comment: Please research these books and then vote yes to limit porn in schools! If the teachers and former teachers commenting here would read these books I hope we would agree that these books are not appropriate in a public school setting. Graphic art depicting dex acts isn't educational. Narration of rape by a parent or teacher in books that describes the act is not educational for our students. It is pornography masquerading as literature. Please read the materials in our discussion. This isn't book banning this is pornography in schools.

Name: Kaycee Schippers

Comment: Why are you only asking for the opinions of people you KNOW are against banning books from schools. You CLAIM this is about parents rights. I AM A PARENT. WHAT ABOUT MY RIGHTS??? There isnt a problem with the reconsideration process the parents who are against it simply dont like the outcome because they want to be able to dictate policy for everyone elses kids!!! Everyone knows that Moms for Liberty IS NOT a grassroots group of moms who are upset about their schools. THEY ARE TRYING TO DESTROY PUBLIC EDUCATION AND YOU ARE HELPING THEM. HISTORY WILL JUDGE YOU AS AN EXTREMIST. Destroying education will be your legacy.

Name: Britannia Morey

Comment: Books are full of different ideas and perspectives because people are different. Individuals have different life experiences and those experiences can be explored through the written word. Books give us as individuals the opportunity to explore that which we don't know, expand our horizons and learn from the stories of others. We grow in empathy and respect, we experience different aspects of the world that are not part of our daily life. Everyone has the right to read and learn from the thoughts and perspectives of different authors, and to see the world through new eyes. Every parent has the right to say NO to a book for their child. They do NOT have the right to dictate their preferences on everyone else. Banning books is wrong. Censorship is wrong. The idea of banning books for everyone because one person or group doesn't like it is wrong. This is fascism, not freedom. One parent or group of parents does not have the right to decide what all students can read or not read. They do not speak for everyone. They do not speak for me. I am a parent, raising my child to seek diverse experiences, to have empathy for circumstances they have not experienced, and to explore the world outside our home. I do NOT want restrictions in my child's education or library experiences that limit them to only the views of Moms for Liberty. I trust those who have dedicated their lives to education. Who have studied and have credentials in education, teaching, and library science. If you truly believe in freedom, the the freedom to access and form ideas, to read books, all books, even if you don't like them personally, must be protected. I support our public schools and speak as a parent of a public school student. Do NOT go down the road of banning books or censorship. Say no to fascism and say yes to a strong public school system and diversity of thought and opinion.

Name: Patty Zahm

Comment: It reeks of extremism when a person cannot go into a school library and locate any item (besides those that are against the federal law, of course) that that person, would like to read. Parents, of course, can clearly set limits in that person's own home. But libraries must store books for all to learn in order for democracy to work. Autocracies and dictatorships began with bans and burning of information for the citizens of countries. It is wrong and will always wrong to begin the process of clearing book from public classrooms and libraries.

Name: Katherine Bogaards

Comment: Thank you for having this committee. The protection of our children is one of our most valuable responsibilities. We the people Iowans voted load and clear that protecting our children and grandchildren is #1 priority. K12 thank you and God bless you

Name: Peter Bogaards

Comment: Please stand for the innocence of all children/minors, books exposing nudity, vulgarity, sexually explicit and sexually alternative depictions, photos drawings language to them in schools or libraries should be stopped except for actual approved sex education in biology classes for an instance, at an appropriate age, if parents want their children to have these, they are readily available for parents to acquire them, nothing is banned, but throwing them out to all minors is like throwing a bucket full of drugs that a few may need at every minor in every school and library expecting them to know not to take them, we have restrictions on alcohol, firearms, driving,etc., as there should be, this type of material should be no different.

Name: Janice Hawkins

Comment: I am a 70 year old woman and I wish to tell you that censoring books for children is SO very wrong. One of my pleasures as a young child was to go to the library, curl up with a book & then borrow a few to take home to read. In 3rd grade our teacher read us a chapter of Enid Blyton's book every day. All this ruckus over books is just a waste of time. The time spent debating this could be better spent locating money to fund our schools. It seems to me some parents are afraid of some books. They're afraid of what ideas they may expose (exposure broadens knowledge..it does not mean to imitate)to a child, provoke thoughtful questions that embarrassed parents can't or don't know how to answer.I am sad that some parents want to limit their children's knowledge because of their own fears or inadequacies. Those parents may do well to enroll in parenting classes where they learn about stimulating a child's learning & setting appropriate boundaries. I very much hope this bill fails. Thank you for reading my comments.

Name: Alison Cocks

Comment: I am dismayed at the state legislatures listening to a minority about banning books that is a national organization and not what the majority of Iowans want for our students. Public education has always been strong in Iowa and the current state government is undermining it and claiming indoctrination. I am a retired teacher and this is disinformation. There is already a process parents can use if they are concerned about a book. That is a democratic process and not interference from state government which would be interfering with peoples civil rights.

Name: STEVE WOLFE

Comment: I would only like to address every comment here that involves the teaching of pronouns or gender teaching or sexuality teaching. It is not happening, If your child told you their teacher did it, taught them what or who they were. You have an easy lawsuit.Using radio stations that share the far right mantra, don't teach black history, one national radio host convinced people all over Iowa that high schoolers were identifying as cats and bring cat litter boxes to school. No, no that never happened. Most schools don't allow unwrapped treats let alone shit boxes. The talk show host that spread it admitted to lying, just like the others who say 911 isn't really, Sandy Hook, didn't happen, and now some college educated young people are saying we never landed on the moon. Are you sure you aren't passing out a drug to these people? It blows my mind at the ignorance, the sheer stupidity of people who listen to these things, and have nothing better to do than to bash fellow Iowans. MOST GOOD PARENTS AND TEACHERS WILL SAY, IN A KIND WAY IF ITS A TEACHER, WORRY ABOUT YOURSELF. WHAT GOOD ARE YOU DOING, IF YOU SAY THIS IS HAPPENING TO YOUR KID, KEEP YOUR DAMN KID

AT HOME. AND WE WILL PUT MONEY INTO MENTAL HEALTH FOR THEM WHEN THEY COME SHOOT UP OUR SCHOOLS. But, ultimately the buck stops with Governor. She opened this box, she lied when she said it was not an attack on public schools, because when we hear these hillbillies saying they know what is going on, and they ABSOLUTELY DO NOT, then she needs to tell where her entire plan was formed. She owes Iowans that, we will not give up telling the truth and fighting for our kids, parents and teachers. Her people, they need help. They need therapy. They need it yesterday. Our most educated states in this country are not following this and those who knew Iowa before are as confused as the rest of us. STOP THIS Kim Reynolds BECAUSE OUR ARTICLES AND EXPOSING TRUTH WILL NOT STOP. YOU ARE NOT GOING TO BULLY THE GOOD OUT OF IOWA.

Name: Megan Gapinski

Comment: The classroom remains the most radical space of possibility. bell hooks As a proud public school teacher, I find this to be true and one of the most exciting parts of being a teacher. At the age I teach, there is nothing but possibilities as my young students are just beginning their educational journey. As a mom, I understand I have the honor and responsibility of being entrusted with students who are someone else's whole world. One of the most important aspects of teaching (and providing a quality, educational experience) is building and maintaining positive relationships with students and families. It's difficult for learning to take place without this. It's also difficult for learning to take place... without proper funding public money should go to public schools; private schools do not have to abide by same oversight; rural schools will suffer when Black and brown children are being disproportionately suspended and expelled when trans youth lack access to gender affirming care, safe restrooms or are banned from sports when the threat of gun violence still plagues our schools when teachers are demoralized labeled as sinister (going from heroes during COVID to villains in just a year's time) when Divisive Concepts laws are passed with vague language that causes teachers to question their ability to teach/discuss certain topics These laws are an attack on the truth and certainly ties in with book bans or certain books being challenged in case you aren't aware, many of these books are books that tell the stories of Black and LGBTQ+ people or by authors in those communities Nikole Hannah-Jones recently stated in a panel at Texas Southern University: ...what we're seeing is part of a very long pattern of turning school boards and public schools into the central battlefield of the culture wars. Why is that..? Nine of 10 American children attend public school... There's almost nowhere else in society where this many people mixed together in the public sphere as public schools... So the way to stoke fear during periods of polarization has always been to go through the schools. This is what we saw during school segregation. She argues that some of the people who have taken over the school boards have inherited the legacy of segregationists who stoke racial fears, who stoked fears of marginalized people in order to gain power, and to control what students are learning, what students could be in the classroom with your kids. And that's what we're seeing right now. She goes on to say ...healthy societies don't ban books, right? Healthy societies don't try to keep children from learning things. A society that wants to suppress speech, that wants to deny our children access to learning, that isn't a scared society, that is a society that actually doesn't believe that it can win the argument. And so instead, they use power to deny our children the right to learn. Let's circle back to possibility. Books (literature) are a big part of the classroom and education experiences. To better explain the possibilities books offer and the importance of literature, I'd like to uplift the work of Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop (professor emerita at Ohio State University, retired, has been referred to as the mother of multicultural children's literature). Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created or recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror. Literature

transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of selfaffirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books... When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part. Our classrooms need to be places where all the children from all the cultures that make up...American society can find their mirrors... Children from dominant social groups have always found their mirrors in books, but they, too, have suffered from the lack of availability of books about others. They need the books as windows onto reality, not just on imaginary worlds. They need books that will help them understand the multicultural nature of the world they live in, and their place as a member of just one group, as well as their connections to all other humans. In this country, where racism is still one of the major unresolved social problems, books may be one of the few places where children who are socially isolated and insulated from the larger world may meet people unlike themselves. If they see only reflections of themselves, they will grow up with an exaggerated sense of their own importance and value in the world a dangerous ethnocentrism... Those of us who are children's literature enthusiasts tend to be somewhat idealistic, believing that some book, some story, some poem can speak to each individual child, and that if we have the time and resources, we can find that book and help to change that child's life, if only for a brief time, and only for a tiny bit. On the other hand, we are realistic enough to know that literature, no matter how powerful, has its limits. It won't take the homeless off our streets; it won't feed the starving of the world; it won't stop people from attacking each other because of our racial differences; it won't stamp out the scourge of drugs. It could, however, help us to understand each other better by helping to change our attitudes towards difference. When there are enough books available that can act as both mirrors and windows for all our children, they will see that we can celebrate both our differences and our similarities, because together they are what make us all human. What I and other parents and educators need from you is your help ensuring that our classrooms and schools CAN be radical spaces of possibility where ALL students can learn. Here are some ways you can help us and our students: Find your own windows and mirrors seek out knowledge from authors that share your identities and those who dont in order to better advocate for yourself and others. Share books with the children in your life that are by authors who share their identity and those who dont. DO NOT BAN BOOKS parents can choose what books they want their child to read, but they should not be making decisions about what books ALL students can or cannot read Instead of creating regressive and harmful bills, we need our legislators to demonstrate: you value diversity you support teachers who incorporate books as windows and mirrors you want to make sure your kids are learning a full and accurate history andsupport teachers who teach the truth you want to address any inequities you want schools to be a safe place you want schools to be a radical space of possibility where all students can learn

Name: Pamela Wilson

Comment: For wanting parents to have choice in sending kids to private schools over private schools, now you want to take away choice in what our children read. If you cannot be smart, at least be consistent.

Name: Carol Gordon

Comment: What right does the Senate have to try to control what we as mature adults read. It is none of your business ALL books have value and it is OUR PERSONAL RIGHT to decide how to expand our minds and think outside the box so to speak. School children also have the right to read whatever their parents and teachers deem appropriate. When a governmental body tries to interfere with the education of students it reeks of authoritarianism. Why are you trying to control what happens in our schools. It shows a lack of respect for those educators who have spent at least 4 years of their lives studying curriculum, teaching methods and stages of

development. Some teachers have spent their careers doing the right thing for students. Someday you will look back at this issue and realize how WRONG you were to try to push this on Iowans. In fact it is a travesty. How many of you Senators have any experience in the field of education. I would also state that your leader, the governor, knowa little to nothing about education and she has made some disastrous mistakes this legislative season. Iowa students are and will be paying the price for the missteps of the legislature and it will show up in the years to come. When I was teaching schools in our state. we were in the top 3 in the nation. Where are we now and why are we there?

Name: John Eller

Comment: Mothers Against Liberty and, shamefully, Republican legislators, are leading us down exactly the same dark path that Germany was on in the earlyto middle 1930s. They are substituting their beliefs for the Enlightenment and religious freedom values our country is based upon, seeking to institute minority and religious rule. They are cheating others from freedom to read what they will. This movement is antipatriotic and antidemocratic, attempting to replace egalitarianism and liberty with provincialism and the pernicious interference of a peoples state ruled by a minority.

Name: Elijah Reid

Comment: I dont understand parents who want no restrictions on books in school, we are talking about minors who are being provided pornography by teachers. It is crazy to think minors are mature enough to decide what is good for them. We might as well let them drink alcohol and smoke using that logic. If you dont think many of these books are pornographic you should read some of the things in there!

Name: George Lake

Comment: Each time you ban a book because one person objects to its content, you are removing the rights of every other person to read that book. If you don't want your child to see or read a specific book, then you control your child and prevent them from reading the book. Don't you dare prevent others from having access to that book. Control your own child don't try to control my children.

Name: Erin Elgin

Comment: I am a mother, a professor, and a bibliophile. I support schools that embrace our U.S. history, even the shameful parts, so that our children can make informed decisions as members of future electorates. I oppose outside interests trying to paint Iowa teachers as vile, corrupt individuals who hate children when most of the teachers I know are caring, thoughtful, inclusive, and supportive. Book banning violates citizens' rights to choose. And it suggests that there is one doctrine that should be heard while others should be silenced. For those who are supporting the book ban, I ask the legislators to discover why. Why are they supporting it? What do they gain? Is it financial? Or is it ideological control, asserting their views as the only ones? Do they get sponsorships? Does someone pay off their debt? What's motivating this group of outsiders (with some colluding Iowans) to promote an agenda a majority of Iowans do NOT want? I want the legislators to probe and uncover these motives prior to making a decision. Hateful language, fearmongering, and othering, popular on social media, may, to some, suggest wide support. But it is a false positive. Social media posts are rewarded for sensationalism and outrage. To pretend otherwise, to let those who spread misinformation about teachers and their interactions with students, is a worrisome sign that critical thinking is largely absent in our legislative body. Listen to the people, not the special interest groups. Iowans do NOT want book bans and they certainly don't want to be part of a state that's importing bad policy from Florida or Missouri. Choose to vote for inclusive education so that our state's future can be a promising one, where all our children have 21st century skillsempathy, critical thinking, and communication...to name a few.

Name: Rachel Henning

Comment: I oppose legislation that would ban books and limit the information and concepts students are exposed to because a few people are uncomfortable with those ideas. Educators and Librarians are trained in introducing and choosing ageappropriate materials; those who have objections to something should try talking to and working with educators to find a solution, not throwing a fit when they don't immediately get their way. There should also be consideration of the Supreme Court cases that have ruled on definitions of pornography and freedom of ideas within schools. Do not allow a few to decide for all parents what their children can read and learn in school.

Name: Lee Robida

Comment: There are some books that should not be shown to a child depending upon the age and content's. But to allow one or two parents, who are against their child from reading a book, and Denying other children/ students the right to read, IS WRONG. What is good for one child/student is not always good for other children / students. I believe in a proper education and allowing a child/student to read what is written.

Name: Sara Parris

Comment: I'll make this easy for everyone. These House Oversight Committee hearings are supposedly about the actual process of challenging a book in a school library or curriculum. Well, great news everyone. Most schools have a process in place. They may not have ever used it, but it's a pretty standard policy to have on the books. The IASB even provides a template that functions perfectly well straight out of the manual. When put in to action, the process works. The book is reviewed by a variety of stakeholders, including students, and a recommendation is made to the superintendent and/or board. Better yet, you don't even need to go through this process if there is a particular book you don't want your child to read. As a parent you have a right to request an alternate selection, and one will be provided. If there is a book you don't want them to check out from the library, you can inform the librarian, and they will be happy to comply. Let's be honest. The real "problem" is that the majority of reconsiderations don't result in books being removed from the shelves or the classroom. Which is, of course, the way it should be. As Eugene O'Neill said, censorship has always been and always will be the last resort of the boob and the bigot. Ah, bigotry. It is at the heart of this fight, after all. Despite what the would-be book banners would have you believe, these book challenges are dreamed up by bigots. It is no accident that while books written by or about marginalized people account for a very small part of published literature, they account for the majority of challenged books. These parents and politicians try to convince you that their concern is for the children and their safety, when really what they're afraid of is their child learning that it is possible to live a happy and productive life outside of their parents' narrow, heteronormative, racist worldview. It is imperative that readers have access to books and characters that are like them. Seeing yourself represented in literature sends a message that you belong, that there are others like you, that there is value in your story. I wish nothing more than for the right book to simply be there for the people who need it, when they need it. I don't need or want another person deciding what I or my child can or should read. Don't let a bunch of sore losers dictate legislation.

Name: Tammy Gable

Comment: No pornography or even slightly sexual books in schools.

Name: Sheila Johnson

Comment: Book banning is a radical and anti-American response to an imaginary problem. This isn't about protecting anyone, it's about trying to erase and silence minorities. Please stop this legislation.