

## Governor's Educator Advisory Council Statement on Banning Books and Censorship of Education March 2022

The American Library Association Bill of Rights<sup>1</sup> states: "Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation."

As educators, we know that teaching to all students is of the utmost importance. Without this crucial part of education, this country runs the risk of never reaching equality. Education is the great equalizer in our society. Any initiative that attempts to water down or eliminate access to books or accurate information is a direct threat to public education, and ultimately, our democracy.

"The authors of the First Amendment knew that novel and unconventional ideas might disturb the complacent, but they chose to encourage a freedom which they believed essential if vigorous enlightenment was ever to triumph over slothful ignorance. This freedom embraces the right to distribute literature, *Lovell v. Griffin*, 303 U.S. 444, 452, 58 S.Ct. 666, 669, 82 L.Ed. 949, and necessarily protects the right to receive it."<sup>2</sup>

Our country was founded on the premises of using education to challenge oppression and tyranny; schools have shown themselves to be places where justice and equality can exist. Our education system was formed as a catalyst for change. Recent opposition to these fundamental beliefs is undermining the future of public education.

Every student should have the opportunity to learn about groups of people and our history accurately. We would be doing our children a disservice to do anything less. Literature may be uncomfortable at times, but just like any disruption, that is how we grow. As educators, we understand that growth and maturity in children are made possible through reading. Every person must have the right to intellectual freedom. When students are not provided access to information, we are doing them a disservice.

Educators are professionals. We have been trained to make sure that our children are learning about life, the world, and our history by developing curriculum and selecting instructional materials. Hindering education denies young people's fundamental rights. Educators foster critical thinking and inspire students to become empathetic. Literacy is the cornerstone of a democratic society.



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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>

<sup>2</sup> *Martin v. Struthers* (1943) <https://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/319/141.html>

