



Citizens for Responsible Education

Newsletter - Winter 2024

Volume 3

NEW YEAR, NEW CHALLENGES

As we dig out the heavy coats from the back of the closet and dust off our shovels for another winter here in the northeast, we can't help but reflect proudly on what's been accomplished over the last few years. With grassroots efforts from our members and friends, Citizens For Responsible Education has been able to broadcast our message far and wide.

Here's a quick recap: CRE was featured in the national news publication, The Epoch Times, and appeared in a segment on Real America's Voice. We funded and organized two successful community forums aimed at educating parents on just what's going on in public schools. CRE sued the city of Newburyport and received a very favorable settlement, including forcing the city to revise its posting policies to protect the free speech rights of its citizens. Now, postings at Newburyport City Hall and the public library may not be censored based on their content or the viewpoints expressed. Lastly, and perhaps most important, we've been able to connect with thousands of like-minded individuals all over this great country of ours through social media.

But, there's more work to do. While we are encouraged by CRE's upward momentum, we know that there are significant challenges up ahead, some of which will be outlined in this newsletter.

Our detractors will most likely continue to sling mud at us, but that's how we know we're right over the target. It's a badge of honor that we happily wear. Please join us for what promises to be an exciting 2024!



MASSACHUSETTS BILLS HB4229 & SB2528 AND WHAT THEY MEAN

On January 10, 2024, House Bill #4229 and Senate Bill #2528, otherwise known as Act(s) Regarding Free Expression, were the subject of a Joint Committee on Education hearing in Boston, MA. The bills in question were filed by Representative John Francis Moran (D-Suffolk) and Senator Julian Cyr (D-Truro).

On the surface, these bills appear harmless, claiming to support public school children and their rights to free expression. When we dig a little deeper, however, and analyze the language contained therein, it becomes obvious rather quickly that this legislation is all about keeping vulgar and sexually-explicit reading material on the library shelves where children have direct access to them. If that weren't bad enough, passage of these bills would make the process of challenging harmful materials in school libraries by parents even more difficult than it already is.

House Bill #4229 contends that if an obscene book is somehow deemed by the school librarian--and the school librarian alone--to contain a shred of educational merit, then the book in question can stay on the shelves. **In other words, if the librarian decides that a book teaching young children how to perform anal sex has some intrinsic academic value, that book remains in the library.** You can't make this stuff up.



State Rep. John Francis Moran of Boston & Senator Julian Cyr proudly promoting pornographic library books

The utter insanity of a policy like this shows just how clueless the woke teachers, librarians and lawmakers are in the state of Massachusetts. It's as if Mr. Moran and Mr. Cyr (pictured left) are going out of their way to put inappropriate reading material in the hands of school children! Either that, or they simply haven't read the filthy books they proudly endorse.

Next up is Senate Bill #2528 which states that when a book deemed appropriate by a librarian is subsequently removed by a school committee vote, then that decision "...may be challenged by any student, parent, or guardian pursuant to section 5 of chapter 249, including on the grounds that the decision was not supported by clear and convincing evidence."

This means that **an offensive book removed from the library for good reason--say, for demonstrating how children can hook up with an adult using the Grindr app--may be challenged by ANY STUDENT or PARENT who wishes to reverse that decision.** Really? CRE believes this provision, if passed, will make it nearly impossible for parental complaints to be taken seriously for fear of legal retaliation against the school or librarian by some high school student with a penchant for social justice.

Make no mistake. We're not singling out school librarians. In fact, we know there are qualified librarians out there who will do what is best for the kids in their schools by removing questionable content. We've just noticed an alarming trend in recent years that is hard to deny--entitled librarians (and teachers alike) with personal and political agendas are not only allowing unsuitable learning materials into school spaces, but they are rigorously defending their choices when confronted. The question is, do you know which librarian is working at your child's school?

At the end of the day, these proposed bills leave us with more questions than answers. Why give sole responsibility for book selection to ONE PERSON with questionable qualifications? Why not establish a committee--made up of parents, teachers and library staff--to look over controversial reading material and make the review process a more balanced one?

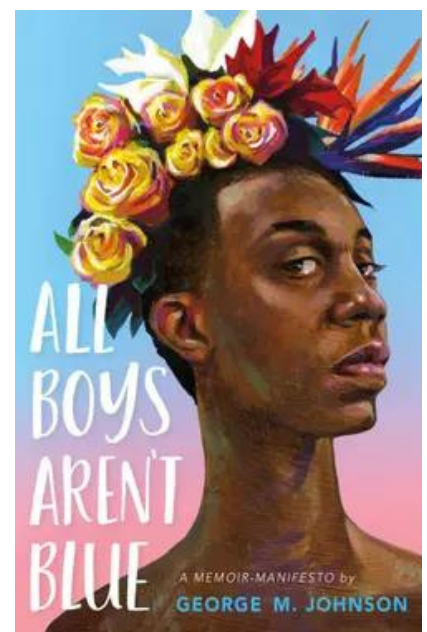
At the time of this writing, House Bill #4229 and Senate Bill #2528 are still in committee. For more information, or to reach out to Mr. Moran and Mr. Cyr and voice your displeasure, please visit <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/H4229> or <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/S2528>.



FEATURE: LIBRARY HALL OF SHAME

In our very first newsletter back in the summer of 2023, CRE reviewed a book in our Library Hall of Shame series entitled Gender Queer by Maia Kobabe. Described as a graphic novel for young adults, Gender Queer reads more like a pornographic diary, complete with graphic, sexually-explicit illustrations. In other words, not reading material that minors should have access to in a public school library.

In this issue, we highlight an equally-appalling book that is currently available for Newburyport High School children to download for free via the taxpayer-funded eBook app, Sora. **Incidentally, Sora is only accessible by teachers and students**



All Boys Aren't Blue by George M. Johnson

using their online Aspen X2 computer logins. Parents DO NOT have access to these accounts.

All Boys Aren't Blue by George M. Johnson is an autobiographical account of the author's teenage and young adult years growing up as a gay black man in New Jersey. While there are many serious discussions surrounding the main character's race and identity throughout, the book really goes off the rails with the countless graphic depictions of sexual activity, sexual assault, molestation and violence.

To list every inappropriate scene, incident and description would easily double the page count of this newsletter, so for the sake of convenience, we've highlighted a portion of the book summary found on www.commonsensemedia.org in order to give a basic overview of what type of language and imagery is contained within the pages of Mr. Johnson's book. We strongly discourage young children from reading the below paragraph.

According to commonsensemedia.org, All Boys Aren't Blue contains the following graphic content: **Sexual assault and molestation by an older teen on a 13-year-old, mentions of an erect penis, touching each other, performing and receiving oral sex, rubbing bodies on the floor and being told to watch the perpetrator masturbate and ejaculate. A 5-year-old is attacked by older elementary-aged kids, held to the ground and kicked in the face until their teeth are shattered. Blood is mentioned and pain is described. Several infamous cases of violence against black and queer people, including one involving sticking a plunger in the victim's rectum and another involving a man who killed his son because he didn't want a gay child.**

To be clear, CRE has no objection to literary works meant for minors that document a character's difficult life story or detail tragic and painful adolescent memories or experiences. We recognize that stories like these often teach children the most valuable lessons. However, we fail to see how the overtly sexual and violent accounts mentioned in the above paragraph contribute in any way to a child's overall learning and enrichment.

Mr. Johnson should absolutely be allowed to tell his story and write about his life in anyway he chooses. But, let's not pretend that the material presented is in some way suitable, or even necessary, for a child's academic development. All Boys Aren't Blue belongs in the adult section of a bookstore, not in a public school library.

For those interested in doing additional research, this publication can easily be found on www.booklooks.org by searching the alphabetical index for the book title.

If you've enjoyed this content, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to Citizens For Responsible Education so that we may continue this important work.

To get involved or for more information, please visit www.citizensforresponsibleeducation.org

Thank you for your continued support!