

PUBLIC COMMENT – OCTOBER 23, 2023
MEETING OF THE ST TAMMANY PARISH LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL

Please print all information. Please return to designated library staff member.
Please use one form for each agenda item you wish to comment on.

I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: 3F
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

FULL NAME: Roxanne Newman

ADDRESS: [REDACTED], Mandeville

TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED] EMAIL: [REDACTED]

This information is a Public Record.

[REDACTED]

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✓ I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: 3 F
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

FULL NAME: MURRY TERRY-SPOS

ADDRESS: [REDACTED] ABITA SPRINGS, LA

TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED] EMAIL: [REDACTED]

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___ **I request to speak** on the following topic/Agenda Item #: F
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

FULL NAME: Kevin Marino

ADDRESS: Mandeville 70448

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____ EMAIL: _____

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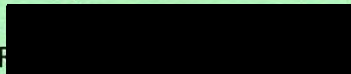

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I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: 3 G
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

STATEMENTS OF CONCERN SHOULD BE REQUIRED
TO ATTEND MEETINGS TO EXPLAIN THEIR
OBJECTION

FULL NAME: JAMIE SEGURA

ADDRESS:  COVINGTON

TELEPHONE NUMBER:  EMAIL: 

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✓ I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: G
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

FULL NAME: Lisa Rustemeyer

ADDRESS: [REDACTED] Cov LA

TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED] EMAIL: [REDACTED]

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X I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: 36
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

FULL NAME: Kevin Marino

ADDRESS: Mandeville 70448

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____ EMAIL: _____

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I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: 36
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

FULL NAME: Roxanne Newman
ADDRESS: [REDACTED] Mandeville
TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED] EMAIL: [REDACTED]

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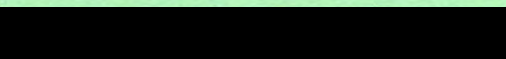
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I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: 36
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

FULL NAME: LUITH TERRY-SILOS

ADDRESS:  ASHITA SIMONS

TELEPHONE NUMBER:  EMAIL: 

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___ I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: 6
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

FULL NAME: Tarri Lewis Stevens

ADDRESS: 

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____ EMAIL: 

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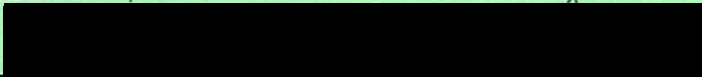
6


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I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: H
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

FULL NAME: Kim Turner

ADDRESS:  Mandeville 70448

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 

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 Request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: H

(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

FULL NAME:

Lisa Rustemeyer

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

EMAIL:

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X I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: 3H
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

FULL NAME: Kern Marino

ADDRESS: Mandeville 70448

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____ EMAIL: _____

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✓ I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: 34
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

FULL NAME: Roxanne Newman

ADDRESS: [REDACTED] Mandeville

TELEPHONE NUMBER [REDACTED] EMAIL: [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]



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I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: 3 H
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

FULL NAME: HUNT TERRY-SIPES

ADDRESS:  ABITA SPRINGS, LA

TELEPHONE NUMBER:  EMAIL: 

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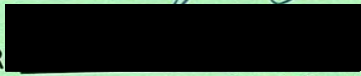
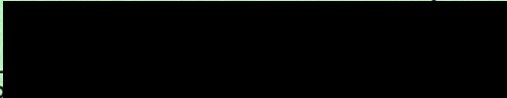
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I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: H
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

FULL NAME: Gary Lacoste

ADDRESS: Abita Springs

TELEPHONE NUMBER:  EMAIL: 

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2 I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: 11

(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

AG now Gov. indicated that challenged
materials may remain on shelves

FULL NAME:

Terri Lewis Stevens

ADDRESS:

Covington

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

EMAIL:

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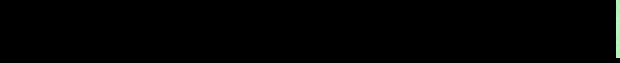
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I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: 3H
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

ALL BOOKS/VIDEOS SHOULD BE MAIN ON
THE SHELVES WHILE BEING REVIEWED.
TO TAKE THEM & SEQUESTER THEM IS
CENSORSHIP

FULL NAME: JAMIE SEGURA

ADDRESS:  COVINGTON

TELEPHONE NUMBER:  EMAIL: 

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✓ I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: J
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

FULL NAME: Gary Lacoste

ADDRESS: Abita Springs


TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED] EMAIL: [REDACTED]


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I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: J The moon within
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

FULL NAME: Catalina Reyna
ADDRESS:  Mandeville

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____ EMAIL: 

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I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: J
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

FULL NAME: Rachel Rhodes
ADDRESS: [Redacted] Mandeville
TELEPHONE NUMBER: [Redacted] EMAIL: [Redacted]

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✓ I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: _____ ✓
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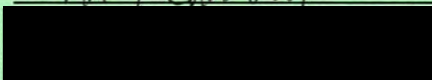
FULL NAME: Lisa Rustemeyer
ADDRESS: [REDACTED] Cov, LA 70433
TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED] EMAIL: [REDACTED]



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I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: J
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

FULL NAME: Erin Kennedy

ADDRESS:  folsom, LA

TELEPHONE NUMBER:  EMAIL: 

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2 I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: J
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

Statements of Concern should be disregarded when the complainant refuses to show up.

FULL NAME: Terri Lewis Stevens

ADDRESS: [Redacted] Corvett

TELEPHONE NUMBER: [Redacted] EMAIL: [Redacted]

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I do not wish to speak but would like my written comment below added to the public record of this meeting. (Your name will **not** be called to approach the Board to speak.)

Agenda Item #: 3J

The Moon Within should not be banned. It should
be returned to the shelf.

FULL NAME: Jackie Hall

ADDRESS:  Madisonville

TELEPHONE NUMBER: N/A EMAIL: N/A

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I **do not** wish to speak but would like my written comment below added to the public record of this meeting. (Your name will **not** be called to approach the Board to speak.)

Agenda Item #: J

please keep the Moon within
on the shelves in the
youth fiction section.

(Thank all the library staff please!)

FULL NAME: Laura Dinapolis

ADDRESS: [REDACTED] Covington LA 70433

TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED] MAIL: [REDACTED]

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I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: k
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

FULL NAME: Gary Lucaste

ADDRESS: Abita Springs

TELEPHONE NUMBER [REDACTED] EMAIL: [REDACTED]

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I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: K
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

FULL NAME: Rachel Rhodes
ADDRESS: [REDACTED] Mandeville
TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED] EMAIL: [REDACTED]

2

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I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: K
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

FULL NAME: Bonnie Schmidt
ADDRESS: [REDACTED] Slidell

TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED] EMAIL: [REDACTED]

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X I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: K
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

FULL NAME: Joan Simon

ADDRESS: [REDACTED] Covington LA 70433

TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED] EMAIL: [REDACTED]

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I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: K
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

True Story by teens for teens

FULL NAME: Ashlie Chatagnier

ADDRESS: [REDACTED] Folsom La

TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED] EMAIL: [REDACTED]

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L I request to speak on the following topic/Agenda Item #: K
(Your name will be called to approach the Board to speak.)

Complaints/Concern should be disregarded
when complainant fails to show up

FULL NAME: Terri Lewis Stevens

ADDRESS: [Redacted] Conngton

TELEPHONE NUMBER: [Redacted] EMAIL: [Redacted]

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I **do not** wish to speak but would like my written comment below added to the public record of this meeting. (Your name will **not** be called to approach the Board to speak.)

Agenda Item #: 3K

The Freedom Writers Diary should not be
banned. It should be returned to the shelf

FULL NAME: Freddie Hall

ADDRESS: [REDACTED] 70447

TELEPHONE NUMBER: NA EMAIL: NA

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Agenda Item #: K

Instead of ~~was~~ spending energy banning and silencing the voices of teenagers why not use the energy to understand their lives and look for *

FULL NAME: Adrienne Petrosini

ADDRESS: 

TELEPHONE NUMBER:  EMAIL: 

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* solutions to the problems that plague our youth-

like poverty, crime, lack of adequate
educational sources.

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I **do not** wish to speak but would like my written comment below added to the public record of this meeting. (Your name will **not** be called to approach the Board to speak.)

Agenda Item #: K

Please keep the Freedom Writers Diary
on the shelves, unrestricted access,
(Thank all the library staff please!)

FULL NAME: Laura Dimopolis

ADDRESS: [REDACTED] Covington LA

TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED] EMAIL: [REDACTED]

From: Larry de Quay [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2023 3:36 PM
To: lboc <lboc@stpl.us>

Cc: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Subject: [External] LBOC Resolutions to be Voted on at 23 October 2023 LBOC Meeting

To Whom It May Concern:

I believe there is a typographical error on the resolution titled "Extension of time to allow for procedural due process of undecided Statements of Concern," on pp. 83 of 117 of the LBOC 'Board Packet' for the subject meeting. The sentence immediately prior to the signature line of the Board President states '23rd DAY OF JUNE 2023' as the date of adoption, when I believe it should state '23rd DAY OF OCTOBER 2023.'

I am very grateful to the members of the LBOC for preparing both resolutions shown on pp. 82 and 83 of 117 in the LBOC 'Board Packet.' Thank you so very much for doing this!

I also wish to state my strong support for voting 'YEA' for both of these proposed resolutions!

My reasons are as follows:

1. Voting 'YEA' brings the procedures and processes of the St. Tammany Parish Library back into conformance with the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution; protecting the rights of all patrons as prescribed under these amendments. I resubmit a document that I previously submitted to the LBOC, attached, to provide (or reiterate) further details to explain why I believe this is so.
2. Given the number of challenged books and the fact that any one person who is a citizen of St. Tammany Parish has the (virtually unbridled) power to challenge any book (literary work), regardless of the reasoning behind this person's actions and regardless if these actions violate Constitutional rights of other citizens; there is a clear need for reasonable time limits to be established for reviews and dispositioning of the challenged books. As things stand now without passage of the proposed resolutions, there are no established time limits and the net result would likely be denial of access to literary works for multiple years, possibly spanning a person's childhood or important formative years.

I regret that I will not be able to attend the subject meeting and trust that this e-mail will convey my views sufficiently for due consideration.

Thank you.

Laurence de Quay, Ph.D., P.E.

Slidell Resident

P.S. - I also attached a recent article from 'Church and State,' a monthly magazine published by Americans United. I hope you find encouragement reading it. I hope you also find further validation that you're taking the correct actions with the proposed resolutions that will hopefully be approved at tonight's meeting.

Statement of Laurence de Quay, Ph.D., P.E.; resident of Slidell, LA dated 30 August 2023.

The language in certain sections of Act No. 436 is problematic at best. This language leaves wide-open opportunities for those in authority, e.g. the Parish Council, to violate the First Amendment under the guise of ‘protecting children.’ This language also places an excessive burden on others; e.g. the Library Board of Control, librarians, and parish citizens; to expend resources, generally at the added expense of taxpayers, to assure First Amendment violations do not occur.

This problematic language includes:

1. The definition of ‘sexually explicit material’ as textual, visual, or audio material, produced in any medium that depicts or describes sexual conduct.
2. The phrase ‘community standards for the population served by the library’ being undefined and left open to widely varying interpretations of what this phrase means, how it is determined or measured, and who makes these determinations and measurements.
3. The mandate for the library board of control to make a determination of library material content as to whether or not it contains ‘sexually explicit material’ as defined above.

Why is this language problematic? The following excerpts from an American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) open letter dated 23 March 2023 are quoted below with my added commentary in red font” to explain.

“Even when a policy restricts access to library books without banning them outright, such as by removing certain titles from the children’s section and restricting them to the adult section, it can violate the First Amendment. When a library reshelves a children’s book into the adult section, it creates significant burdens on readers’ ability to access that book—children and parents searching for the book in the children’s section may never find it, children simply browsing for books that spark their interest will never come across it, and other patrons may avoid checking the book out of the library because the book’s relocation “attaches an unconstitutional stigma” to it. *Id.* at 550 (citing *Denver Area Educ. Telecomm. Consortium, Inc. v. FCC*, 518 U.S. 727 (1996)).

To the extent that removals, reclassifications, or other restrictions are based on the content or viewpoint expressed in the material, the action is even more likely to violate the Constitution. “Even where a regulation does not silence speech altogether, the Supreme Court has given ‘the most exacting scrutiny to regulations that suppress, disadvantage, or impose differential burdens upon speech because of its content.’” *Id.* at 549–50 (quoting *Turner Broadcasting, Inc. v. FCC*, 512 U.S. 622, 641 (1994)).”

The current situation has over 150 works of literature kept behind the library main desk where all patrons are required to request each of these while library board of control (LBOC) reviews are pending. Given the pace of LBOC reviews to date, many of these works will remain restricted for years. Per the two paragraphs above, an unconstitutional stigma has been attached to each of these works and the act of restricting access is likely to be a violation of the Constitution.

Additionally, the requirement to make a determination and publically state that a literary work contains ‘sexually explicit material’ will likely lead many or most citizens of our parish to falsely

believe that this work contains pornography or other material that can or will be harmful to children. This is a violation of the Constitution per the excerpts above.

“The First Amendment’s protections apply with immense force in both school libraries and public libraries. “The principles set forth in *Pico* —a school library case—have even greater force when applied to public libraries.” *Sund*, 121 F. Supp. 2d at 548. Local governments “cannot limit access to library materials solely on the basis of the content of those materials, unless the [government] can demonstrate that the restriction is necessary to achieve a compelling government interest and there are no less restrictive alternatives for achieving that interest.” *Id.*”

There is no apparent compelling government interest that is protected by forcing a public disclosure that a literary work contains ‘sexually explicit material’ as defined in ACT No. 436, if this work does not contain pornography and if this work presents this material in a way that is harmless or beneficial to children or expands scientific knowledge and understanding of the reader/viewer. This forced disclosure will lead many or most citizens to falsely conclude that a work is harmful to children, when it is not. There are clearly alternatives that can be applied to protect children from material that is harmful to them and that are far less restrictive than putting books behind the library desk and declaring that a book contains ‘sexually explicit materials.’

“Courts have consistently ruled that censoring books because they express support or tolerance for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people is a form of viewpoint-based discrimination that violates the First and Fourteenth Amendments.

- Censorship of LGBTQ-supportive websites in school library violated the First Amendment. *Parents, Fams., & Friends of Lesbians & Gays, Inc. v. Camdenton R-III Sch. Dist.*, 853 F. Supp. 2d 888, 897 (W.D. Mo. 2012).
- Districts cannot allow members of the public to demand refusal of children’s library books with LGBTQ+ content. *Sund v. City of Wichita Falls, Tex.*, 121 F. Supp. 2d 530, 532 (N.D. Tex. 2000).
- Removal of book depicting romance between two women from school libraries violated First Amendment. *Case v. Unified Sch. Dist. No. 233*, 908 F. Supp. 864, 875 (D. Kan. 1995).
- Local school boards may not remove books from school library shelves simply because they dislike the ideas contained in those books. *Bd. of Educ., Island Trees Union Free Sch. Dist. No. 26 v. Pico*, 457 U.S. 853, 872 (1982) (plurality). “

“The government cannot selectively target LGBTQ+ books for removal without violating the First Amendment and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, both of which supersede conflicting state laws. “[L]ocal school boards may not remove books from school library shelves simply because they dislike the ideas contained in those books.” *Pico*, 457 U.S. at 867, 872 (1982). Suppressing speech based on its perceived opinions—i.e., viewpoint-based discrimination—is “an egregious form of content discrimination” that clearly violates the First Amendment. *Rosenberger*, 515 U.S. at 829.”

A large portion of the literary works, if not the majority of them, that have been placed under restricted access and are pending LBOC reviews are LGBTQ+ books. Many or most of these books do not contain any ‘sexually explicit material’ even under the broad definition given in ACT No. 436.

The state and parish governments are indirectly targeting LGBTQ+ books by their support and promotion of organizations and people who have moral and religious objections to LGBTQ+ people or their lifestyles; encouraging/telling them to actively seek out books that they deem to be offensive or harmful and essentially giving them unbridled power to effectively deny First Amendment rights to people who do not hold the same moral and religious views.

“Notably, if all books in a public or school library were removed or restricted based on the expansive definition of “sexually explicit material” included in the recently filed Senate Bill 7 and House Bill 102 (*and now in ACT No. 436*), it would require the restriction of the Bible, many plays by William Shakespeare and others from antiquity, and novels like the Fountainhead. S.B. 7, 2023 Leg., Reg. Sess. (La. 2023); H.B. 102, 2023 Leg. Reg. Sess. (La. 2023). To focus primarily on LGBTQ+ books, and not include books which feature similarly explicit references to heterosexual acts or relationships is discriminatory. *See Obergefell v. Hodges*, 576 U.S. 644, 666, 135 S. Ct. 2584, 2599 (2015) (homosexual relationships are entitled to the same dignity and respect as heterosexual relationships).”

Don't be surprised if parish citizens start filing complaints about Bibles and books authored by right-wing zealots and political leaders. Don't be surprised if huge numbers of literary works, including the classics, excellent children's literature, biographies, and political commentary, are restricted. I can easily envision an 'arms race' (or race to the bottom) where huge numbers of literary works are not on the shelves readily accessible to the public.

“In addition to the First Amendment, a library policy or local ordinance seeking to limit or regulate speech must also comport with the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Specifically, vagueness in a policy's definitions, scope, and criteria for enforcement will offend constitutional due process guarantees. Any policy or statute that dictates actions “in terms so vague that [people] of common intelligence must necessarily guess at its meaning and differ as to its application” will violate the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of due process of law. *Cramp v. Bd. of Pub. Instruction of Orange Cnty., Fla.*, 368 U.S. 278, 287 (1961) (quoting *Connally v. Gen. Const. Co.*, 269 U.S. 385, 391 (1926)). Vagueness in law and policy runs counter to due process principles because it invites arbitrary, discriminatory, and disparate enforcement. *Keyishian v. Bd. of Regents of Univ. of State of N. Y.*, 385 U.S. 589, 604 (1967) (internal citation omitted); *see also Cramp*, 368 U.S. at 279; *Sund*, 121 F. Supp. 2d at 553. And when the policy or statute at issue could inhibit fundamental constitutional rights, such as free speech, a policy or statute will be subject to even stricter standards of vagueness. *Id.* at 281.”

Again, the expansive definition of 'sexually explicit materials' now contained in ACT No. 436 could readily be interpreted to cover science textbooks describing and illustrating reproductive physiology and processes in animals (both human and non-human) in addition to all or nearly all translations of the Bible and other classic literary works mentioned above. Also, the vague and undefined phrase, 'community standards for the population served by the library,' and the requirement to consider this in all LBOC reviews related to minors having access, is a Fourteenth Amendment violation per the excerpt in the above paragraph.

Federal court strikes down Ark. ban on 'harmful' books

A federal court in late July temporarily blocked a new Arkansas law that made it illegal for public libraries and bookstores to offer material that is "harmful" to minors.

U.S. District Judge Timothy L. Brooks put the law on hold while a legal challenge against it proceeds. The law, which was scheduled to take effect Aug. 1, was passed by the state legislature and signed by Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders (R). In addition to enabling criminal charges against booksellers, the law would have created a new process to challenge library materials and allowed anyone who claimed to have been "affected" by a book to demand its review.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Arkansas, the Central Arkansas Library System and others challenged the law in court. Holly Dickson, executive director of the ACLU of Arkansas, applauded the ruling, remarking, "The question we had to ask was, do Arkansans still legally have access to reading materials? Luckily, the judicial system has once again defended our highly valued liberties."

The law is one among several provisions that have been passed in states that target public libraries and/or bookstores by attempting to remove certain materials or place them on restricted access. Opponents of these laws say they are vague and designed to have a chilling effect. Most of the material targeted deals with LGBTQ+ themes.

In his ruling, Brooks wrote the law "would permit, if not encourage, library committees and local governmental bodies to make censorship decisions based on content or viewpoint," and thus violate the First Amendment.

Brooks also cited Ray Bradbury's classic novel *Fahrenheit 451*, about a future society that burns books: "There is more than one way to burn a book. And the world is full of people running about with lit matches." (*Fayetteville Public Library v. Crawford County, Ark.*)

In other news about censorship:

- An effort by conservative religious extremists to remove LGBTQ+-themed books from a public library in California backfired when word got out about what was going on.

The Rancho Peñasquitos branch of the San Diego Public Library was targeted by two residents who objected to a Pride display at the branch. They checked out nearly every book in the display and told library staff they would not return them until the library agreed to remove "inappropriate content" from the shelves per-

manently.

After the San Diego *Union-Tribune* ran a story about the matter, the library began receiving boxes containing donated copies of the books checked out by the two protesters. The library also received over \$15,000 in donations, which the city has agreed to match to provide more LGBTQ+ programming and material, including expansion of the library system's Drag Queen Story Hour.

The protesters who checked out the books in the display apparently copied a template from the group CatholicVote's "Hide the Pride" campaign, which instructs supporters to check out or move books with LGBTQ+ themes and characters from public libraries.

- Educators in Florida are worried that a new state law curbing "sexual" material in classrooms will prevent them from teaching Shakespeare plays.

Officials in Hillsborough County recently announced that they will use only excerpts from plays instead of having students read them in their entirety. State education officials insist that Shakespeare plays can still be used in classrooms; but some teachers, noting that the new law gives broad powers to members of the community to challenge materials, say they fear losing their jobs if they use the plays.

- Officials in Warren County, Va., slashed funding for the county's lone public library by 75% in response to complaints from a group of residents over the presence of LGBTQ+-themed books in the collection.

The group, Clean Up Samuels, demanded the removal of 134 books in the Samuels Public Library. The books are being reviewed, and the library announced a new system that gives parents more say in what books their



Public library: Target of Christian Nationalist attacks

children check out.

In early August, the library's director, Michelle Ross, announced her resignation.

- Former President Barack Obama penned an open letter in July thanking librarians for the work they do and urging them to resist censorship efforts.

"Today, some of the books that shaped my life – and the lives of so many others – are being challenged by people who disagree with certain ideas or perspectives," Obama wrote. "It's no coincidence that these 'banned books' are often written by or feature people of color, indigenous people, and members of the LGBTQ+ community – though there have also been unfortunate instances in which books by conservative authors or books containing 'triggering' words or scenes have been targets for removal. Either way, the impulse seems to be to silence, rather than engage, rebut, learn from or seek to understand views that don't fit our own."

The letter continues, "I believe such an approach is profoundly misguided, and contrary to what has made this country great. As I've said before, not only is it important for young people from all walks of life to see themselves represented in the pages of books, but it's also important for all of us to engage with different ideas and points of view.

Federal appeals court permits Ind. Catholic school to fire guidance counselor over same-sex wedding

A federal appeals court ruled July 13 that Roncalli High School and officials at the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Indianapolis were within their rights to fire Shelly Fitzgerald, a guidance counselor who exercised her legal right to marry someone of the same gender.

The 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals held that the "ministerial exception" prevents Fitzgerald from vindicating her rights to be free from discrimination. This court-created doctrine circumvents civil rights laws by allowing religious employers to discriminate against employees who perform important religious duties.

Americans United, which was part of a team that represented Fitzgerald in court, asserted that she was not a minister, noting that Fitzgerald had no explicit religious duties. Her main job was providing secular counseling to students.

Rachel Laser, President and CEO of Americans United,



Fitzgerald (center): No recourse in court

criticized the ruling in *Fitzgerald v. Roncalli High School, Inc.*

"Religious extremists are waging a crusade to undermine basic civil rights and won a disturbing victory before the Supreme Court in the *303 Creative LLC v. Elenis* case just weeks ago," Laser said. "Shelly Fitzgerald's case was another line of attack. These religious extremists are trying to expand a narrow, commonsense rule – meant to allow houses of worship to select their own clergy according to their own faith – into a broad license to circumvent civil rights laws and to discriminate."

Added Laser, "Shelly Fitzgerald, like most employees at religious organizations, wasn't hired to minister to students or to preach the Catholic religion. She was hired to provide secular guidance to students seeking to get into college. She should not have lost her civil rights simply because the secular work she performed was done at a religious school."

Laser concluded, "I want to commend our plaintiff, Shelly Fitzgerald, for courageously speaking up on behalf of all people vulnerable to discrimination in the name of religion. Shelly and brave people like her are on the front lines warning the American people about the very real threats we face from a shadowy network of religious extremists working to turn religious freedom from a shield into a sword to harm others and violate their rights."

Americans United Litigation Fellow Gabriela Hybel argued Fitzgerald's case before the 7th Circuit. Fitzgerald was represented by AU Litigation Counsel Bradley Girard; Hybel; Mark Sniderman of Findling, Park, Conyers, Woody & Sniderman, P.C.; and David Page of Henn Haworth Cummings & Page.

From: Sonnet Ireland [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, October 23, 2023 4:51:44 PM

To: lboc <lboc@stpl.us>

Subject: [External] Agenda Item 3H Resolution to rescind December 13th, 2022 Resolution

Dear LBOC,

I greatly support you deciding to rescind the resolution passed on December 13th, 2022. As you are aware, Act 436 does not require this, and this action has not placated any of the people filing complaints against books in the library. Aside from the extra cost and the extra strain on staff, it has not helped the matter at all. If the resolution is not rescinded, I suspect the Library will see an increase in book complaints from people who are actually against censorship in a misguided attempt to "break" the system that currently sees over a hundred books kept behind the circulation desk. By rescinding this resolution, you are showing that the Library will not give in to bad faith actors who do not have legitimate and personal concerns about a title. The reconsideration process was never meant to be used as a weapon, as we are seeing now. It was meant to be used by thoughtful residents with legitimate concerns about a title who wanted to talk with someone about their concerns. I encourage you to rectify that mistake made in December. While you made this resolution in good faith, you were unfortunately extending a hand to people who are not seeking a compromise or a positive solution.

Thank you,

Sonnet Ireland

(Slidell, La)