

Testimony in Opposition to
HB 25
Public Schools – Sexually Explicit Materials – Prohibited in Libraries and Media Centers
Submitted on Behalf of Citizens for Maryland Libraries

Madam Chair and Honored Members of the Committee,

Citizens for Maryland Libraries (CML), wish to voice its strong opposition to HB025. CML is a non-profit association that works to build greater public awareness of the need for the services that Maryland libraries, school, academic and public, across the state provide its citizens. CML is a strong statewide network of individuals and organizations who value and advocate for Maryland libraries of all types especially our public and school libraries.

To read and read well is the single best predictor that a child will be successful in school and successful in life. School librarians and media specialist dedicate their lives to helping our children find the resources they need to become lifelong readers. They are careful to provide reading materials and literary works that are well reviewed and that contribute to a well-rounded collection appropriate for each age.

HB 25 uses vague and extremely broad language that can lead to books being removed and banned from library shelves at the arbitrary whims of interests groups.

This month the world paused to acknowledge International Holocaust Remembrance Day. We respectfully wish to acknowledge a benchmark of that terrible era, May 1933. In that month, in cities and towns all over Germany, tens of thousands of books in public, school and academic libraries were pulled off the shelves, thrown into the street and set on fire. Why? Because they did not agree with German “values.” Yes, they burned books by political dissenters who did not agree with National Socialist philosophy and books by Jewish authors. No surprise, however, they also burned books from authors like Hemingway and Steinbeck. Ironically, it was a German philosopher, Heinrech Heine who a century before that stated, “Where they burn books, they will ultimately burn people.”

Distinguished members of the committee, not here, not in Maryland and hopefully not in the United States of America. Please vote unfavorable to HB25.