



MASSACHUSETTS FAMILY INSTITUTE

*Dedicated to Strengthening the Family*

MFI BRIEF

# WHY WE OPPOSE THE PORNOGRAPHIC SCHOOLBOOK BILLS HB4229/SB2528

## “AN ACT REGARDING FREE EXPRESSION”

These bills are designed to keep vulgar, sexually explicit books on the shelves of public school libraries, where minor students can access them. Under the guise of preventing “book banning,” radical legislators want to make it nearly impossible for local school committees to protect children from age-inappropriate content at school.

Here are some of the reasons we oppose these bills:

### Keeps Pornography on the Shelves

In recent years, there has been an alarming increase in the amount of vulgar, sexually explicit, and downright pornographic material in school libraries. Schools not only have a right, but also a moral duty, to keep this material away from kids. But these bills would prevent a school committee from removing an explicit book from a library unless the book is “devoid of any educational, literary, artistic or social value or is not age appropriate for any children who attend the school.” This means that if a book could conceivably be deemed appropriate for the most mature high school senior, it must be kept in the school library. This subjectively worded standard sets no real limits on what material can be in school libraries; everything would be fair game, even for the youngest of students.

### Strips Away Local Control

No two school districts are the same. Local school committees need discretion to craft their own policies in response to the needs and value preferences of their communities. But these bills would impose a one-size-fits-all policy created by the State onto all school districts in Massachusetts. This new policy would give almost unlimited

discretion to school librarians to decide which books are age-appropriate for students and would force school committees to go through a cumbersome review process if they disagree with a librarian’s decision. While many school librarians do great work, in other cases, activist librarians are the ones introducing explicit materials in the first place. Parents, through the elected school committee members who represent them, should have the final say on what content is appropriate for their children. But these bills would tie their hands.

### Exposes Schools to Lawsuits for Trying to Protect Kids

Finally, these bills give people a right to *sue their school* if they disagree with a school’s decision to remove an explicit book. This shocking provision shows just how radical these bills are. Schools have an obligation to protect kids from inappropriate content, but these bills would expose them to massive liability for doing so.

Sexually explicit books don’t belong in school libraries, and preventing kids from accessing them isn’t “book banning.” These pornographic schoolbook bills are based on a false premise and represent a dangerous attack on local school control, parental rights, and the innocence of children.

Visit [mafamilly.org/takeaction](https://mafamilly.org/takeaction) to learn how to oppose these bills.

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