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Stop Banning Books

In recent years, there has been a surge of Republican State Lawmakers enforcing a ban on books in public education curriculums. Across the US, Republican lawmakers have threatened to withdraw funding in libraries in pursuit to control the books being read. Books like, “All Boys aren’t blue,” “Brave New World,” “Perks of Being a Wallflower” and so many more are banned from multiple school curriculums due to government involvement. Many of these banned books include LGBTQ and dystopian storylines. Many reasons these lawmakers have wiped out these books from public education are because of religious blasphemy and sexually explicit content in the books.

This enforcement to ban books is extremely dangerous and is an unhealthy practice in a democracy. The government's enforcement of banning books is not only damaging towards the public education system but is threatening toward the United States Democracy and its Amendments. Banning books is dangerous towards democracy and needs to be stopped because it weakens public education, limits exposure to a variety of viewpoints, and disobeys the 1st Amendment.

Banning Books in school curriculums is weakening public school education. Banning books like “Brave New World” and “The Handmaid’s Tale” are purposeful to restrict students

from forming opinions on these storylines and reflecting similarities to our reality. By restricting these books students are lacking critical thinking and learning that could be activated by these books, “Book bans diminish the quality of education students receive as they become sheltered from true history and ideas that allow for society to flourish and grow” (The Need). By hiding these inclusive narratives, younger generations will not learn about these diverse backgrounds and history. It is weakening the educational system because books being banned are ones with history embedded in them. Like “The Color Purple” and “Beloved.” Taking away these books is negatively impacting student engagement. Due to the now slim options for students for independent reading, they are less enthusiastic about reading. Educators have noticed that “72 percent said that when their students’ access to books is restricted, student reading engagement declines” (How Does). As “Unite Against Book Bans” states. “72 percent” of educators have noticed a change in students' enthusiasm for reading after the enforcement of banning books. With less engagement, students are more likely to not absorb the information and may even not do the work in classes.

Banning books in public education is dangerous towards democracy because it limits students from learning about diverse communities and groups. Many books involving diverse communities are being shunned upon from republicans. An example of diverse communities being shielded is the LGBTQ and many more, “Both the ALA and PEN agree that the majority of the books being banned are in the young adult category and contain storylines featuring LGBTQ+ issues (674 titles), protagonists or secondary characters of color (659 titles), or directly address issues of race or racism (338 titles)” (Does Banning). Many books that are banned are ones that include LGBTQ+ and race. By banning books with LGBTQ storylines and “issues of race,” the Government is trying to silence history and minorities struggles. By erasing books that

include stories about diverse communities, it is impacting younger generations' engagement with others. They are limiting younger generations' exposure to diverse communities. This stops students from learning about different communities and shields them from the hardships these communities face. Many educators have come to the conclusion that banning books has negative effects on students in diverse communities, “The Associate Professor of Economics and Education at the Teacher’s College at Columbia University explains that *books can change outcomes for students themselves when they see people who look like them presented.*” Not only do limiting these storylines threaten students' engagement with diverse communities, but it also endangers the children of these diverse communities when their books are being banned. Banning books damages a student's self-esteem and self-identity when books like their background and community are being withdrawn from school curriculums.

Banning books is extremely dangerous to our democracy because it violates the 1st Amendment. Banning books is one of the many attempts the US Government is making to silence those they disagree with. Banning Books are steps the Government is taking too slowly disregard US citizens' right of freedom of speech and freedom to learn, “Book bans violate the First Amendment because they deprive children or students of the right to receive information and ideas” (Does Banning). Banning books violates the 1st Amendment because the government is taking away information from citizens, when the 1st Amendment is supposed to protect citizens “right to receive information.” Now for banned books to be considered unconstitutional, they must be banned due to discrimination, “These actions only violate the First Amendment if a government official removes a book or restricts access to it because they dislike the ideas or disagree with the viewpoints contained in that book. This is known as viewpoint discrimination.”(What is Book). For most of these banned books, they were banned due to

religious blasphemy and discrimination against minorities. Which falls into viewpoint discrimination and makes these banned books unconstitutional.

Although the Government cannot completely ban these books in the US completely, they are still disregarding the 1st Amendment because they are limiting these writers' voices and limiting students' opportunities to learn from these books in school. Banning books based on conservative beliefs is unconstitutional. The Government is failing to give students their full potential by allowing schools to store these books in their classrooms.

The Government needs to stop banning books. Banning books is dangerous towards democracy and needs to be stopped because it weakens public education, limits exposure to a variety of viewpoints, and disobeys the 1st Amendment. Banning these books is a contradictory democracy. It is taking away critical thinking from younger generations in public education. Students have lost interest in reading. Banning books is endangering our democracy and limiting the potential of younger generations' critical thinking and engagement. Banning books contradicts freedom of expression and speech. Therefore, banning books is a dangerous practice and needs to be stopped.