

Oppose the Parents Bill of Rights Act, H.R. 5



H.R. 5 would undermine partnerships between parents and educators, increase book bans and censorship, and weaken local control of schools.

IGNORES BREADTH OF PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

- ▶ Chances for student success are best when parents, guardians, and other family members are engaged and active in the school community. This involvement includes meeting with educators regularly, volunteering for school activities and trips, participating in PTAs, and more.
- ▶ The legislation ignores the widespread parental engagement that occurs daily. Instead of helping to build strong parent-educator relationships, the bill would sow distrust between the most important adults in children’s lives, foster an “us vs. them” mindset, and divert attention from what students truly need: individualized support, safe schools, and more educators.

WOULD CATALYZE BOOK BANS AND CENSORSHIP

- ▶ Some of the bill’s provisions would accelerate the book banning and censorship we are seeing nationwide by providing cover to a small group seeking to censor what students can learn about and read. This would leave them less prepared to thrive in our complex, diverse, and interconnected world.
- ▶ The [PEN America Index of School Book Bans](#) lists more than 2,500 instances of book bans across the country from June 2021-June 2022, affecting more than 1,600 titles. These include:
 - *Maus*, a graphic novel by Art Spiegelman, depicting his father’s experience as a Holocaust survivor
 - *Walk Two Moons*, by Sharon Creech, about a girl of Native American heritage coping with the disappearance of her mother
 - *The Bluest Eye*, by Toni Morrison, about a young black girl’s struggle to appreciate her humanity and value
 - *Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and her Family’s Fight for Desegregation*, banned in some districts, allowed in others with certain sections censored, about the Mendez family’s fight to desegregate schools in California
- ▶ The PEN America report states: “This book-banning effort is continuing as the 2022-23 school year begins, too, with at least 139 additional bans taking effect since July 2022.”

DISREGARDS EDUCATOR EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE

- ▶ Educators are dedicated to teaching and supporting all students—no matter their race, ZIP Code, or background. H.R. 5 ignores their ability, in concert with parents, to make decisions based on their experience and expertise about what is best for students.

- ▶ The House Education and the Workforce Committee’s markup of H.R. 5 added provisions that make it even more onerous than the original bill.
- ▶ The amendments included one that would create a structure for a “review period” during which parents could inspect instructional materials. The review period would occur at least every three weeks and last a minimum of three school days, during which parents would review any materials expected to be used in the upcoming three weeks, and any materials used in the past.
- ▶ In an [NEA survey last year](#), 55 percent of educators said that the stress of the job is prompting them to consider leaving the profession they love earlier than planned. The pandemic accelerated America’s years-long educator shortage; H.R. 5 and its unnecessary and burdensome provisions will quicken it.

INSERTS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INTO LOCAL DECISIONS

- ▶ The legislation inserts the federal government into school decisions, weakening the voices and prerogatives of local communities.
- ▶ Some of the “rights” the bill purports to provide are already local and state policies—where they should be enacted, instead of at the federal level.
- ▶ H.R. 5 is an unfunded federal mandate, requiring school districts to meet additional compliance burdens and administrative costs that would divert money and time from addressing crucial needs, such as providing the technology, safe schools, small class sizes, and one-on-one attention students need.