

May 17, 2022

Students' Rights Coalition

Parent Organizations

Moms for Social Justice

TN/MO/AS/CA/DC

hello@momsforsocialjustice.us

momsforsocialjustice.us

Florida Freedom to Read Project

FL

flfreedomtoreadproject@gmail.com

fftrp.org

Network For Public Education

USA

info@networkforpubliceducation.org

networkforpubliceducation.org

Red Wine & Blue

USA

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You Belong Campaign

PA

youbelongcampaign@gmail.com

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United in Learning

NY

info@unitedinlearning.com

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Save Our Schools NC

NC

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Williamson Strong

TN

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www.williamsonstrong.org

Parents Educating Parents, Inc.

NJ

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www.parentseducatingparents.weebly.com

Dear Members of Congress,

We are a coalition of parent groups from around the United States that feel this new movement of legislation in the name of 'parental rights' does not reflect the values or wants of a majority of parents, but more importantly fails to meet the needs of our diverse student body that has but one opportunity at a robust, high quality, and free K-12 education.

Indoctrination happens in the absence of access to information. It's when people in power decide to withhold information that contradicts their chosen narrative. So long as we continue to provide equal access to all information and ideas regardless of personal viewpoint, accusations of indoctrination are without merit.

We wholly reject the idea that 'woke indoctrination' is happening in our schools. This claim is intellectually lazy and lacks evidence here on the ground. We recognize these are coordinated, political efforts to foment distrust in our education system with the ultimate goal of defunding public education. We will not standby and allow our students' public school education to be put at risk for political gain.

We have always been involved parents that rely on great relationships with our educators and schools. We see the infinite value in our professional educators because they see the infinite value in our students. We are members of the PTA/PTO. We volunteer in our classrooms and libraries. We know where to go and who to ask to address our concerns in the public schools in which our students actually attend.

The new legislation is massive, government overreach in our schools to address a fabricated problem. Representation is not indoctrination. The recommended, age-relevant instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity before grade 3 promotes an awareness of how families and individuals may differ for the purposes of teaching empathy and respect. Affirming diverse family and human experiences is not sex education. It's anti-bullying education at exactly the time when our young students are most in need of it.

Social Emotional Learning and Culturally Responsive Teaching are tools the majority of parents want in our students' education. It is more important now than ever that our students have the opportunity to flex their social skills during classroom lessons. It makes them feel better engaged with the material and connects them with the unique cultural histories within the classroom. After two years of irregular classroom environments and with our unusual track record for violence in schools, empathy and connection are necessary in K-12 education.

Downingtown Area School District Citizens

Empowering Our Schools

PA

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SOS Union County

NC

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Citizen Action of New York

NY

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Richmond For All

VA

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Loudoun For All

VA

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Save Our Schools NJ

NJ Community Schools Coalition

NJ

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Free to Read Rochester

MI

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Families for Safe Schools

FL

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www.familiesforsafeschools.com

The founding fathers detailed the importance of an educated electorate as being vital to the preservation of our democracy. While we know that wasn't inclusive of all Americans at the time, we know better now that our rights and laws must be applied equally. The idea that one's understanding of our shared history and the lessons derived may differ from state-to-state is alarming and dangerous as evidenced by our current cultural wars. We cannot leave out the existence or lived experiences of entire groups of people from an education system designed to serve all. We insist that elective learning in the classrooms and libraries remain open and accessible allowing for a wide-array of imaginative knowledge growth opportunities. Our students deserve nothing less and the shared values of our fragile democracy demands it.

"Education means emancipation. It means light and liberty. It means the uplifting of the soul of man into the glorious light of truth, the light by which men can only be made free." – Frederick Douglass, *Blessings of Liberty and Education*

Sincerely,

Parents of Students Attending Public Schools