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The Maryland Library Association opposes the new policy enacted by the Carroll County Public Schools Board of Education, which removes a textbook or library book if it fits a biased, broad, and subjective definition of "sexually explicit." This policy will hinder the learning and development of students by denying them equal and equitable access to library resources.

The school library plays a unique role in promoting intellectual and extracurricular interests. It serves as an access point for students to information and ideas spanning the spectrum of knowledge and opinions as they acquire critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed to engage productively in a diverse, democratic society.

The Maryland Library Association encourages families and caregivers to play an active role in the education of their children, including what library materials their children engage with. However, this active role should not extend to determining what other children and families may access in their school libraries based on ideology and a woefully subjective definition of what is "sexually explicit" by a vocal minority. None of the 61 books challenged and removed from the shelves of Carroll County middle and high school libraries passed the legal test for being obscene or pornographic (as outlined in *Miller v. California*, 1973). Censorship of library materials deprives students of the opportunity to think critically, undermining the school library's role in promoting intellectual freedom and diversity.

The Maryland Library Association urges the Carroll County Public Schools Board of Education to rescind this harmful and detrimental policy and adopt a new policy, based on the recommendations of professional school librarians and media specialists, that is consistent with the principles of intellectual freedom and the role of the school library in the educational process.



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