

Library Petition— Why we shouldn't ban* children's books

What's wrong with having a Book Review Committee?

- Parents should decide what books are OK for their own children. If the Committee blocks a book, it is not available for a parent to choose for their child.
- There are no qualifications needed to be on the committee—Librarians are highly trained, including how to select appropriate books and how to guide readers to the right book for them.
- There is no definition of "Community Standards". The Committee can make it up as they go.
- The Committee's decisions are final and unappealable—they can never be reversed. 30 years from now, the books that were disallowed this year will still be disallowed from the HBPL.

Why are we letting CHILDREN read books about sex?

- WE'RE NOT! Children under 12 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. The adult will decide what is appropriate for their child—not a government committee.
- Learning about our bodies is not the same as gratuitous sex.
- Children are defined as "under 18", as if toddlers, elementary school children, and teenagers have the same reading interests.
- Teens and young adults have a real need to access information that will help them.
- Kids will try to find answers and the internet and friends are not the best sources. Libraries are.
- Kids are too embarrassed to ask their parents about things they hear other kids talk about on the playground that they don't understand.
- Books help kids understand boundaries and when to object if something is inappropriate. IGNORANCE is the danger, not information!

I don't have kids, why should I care?

- The ordinance restricts access to anyone under 18. The right to receive information is protected by the First Amendment; this concerns everyone.
- This is about protecting the HB Public Library from City Council overreach. After this, what other part of the library or other public entity will the Council go after?
- It's just a bad law and poorly written. It contradicts itself and can break the functioning of the library.

Kids can get books from their school's library or a bookstore or online, so what's the problem if HBPL doesn't have a book?

- School libraries are small and very limited.
- Not all students can afford to buy a book. Public libraries are public goods - available to anyone with a library card.

Librarians are liberal – they don't represent the City.

- Librarians adhere to a code of ethics that requires them to distinguish between their personal convictions and professional duties and may not allow their personal beliefs to interfere with their work. Librarians and parents work together to find the right kids' books for all reading levels.
- Librarians select a wide variety of materials to be available, including topics that may be considered controversial.

Won't exposing children to LGBTQ+ information groom them and make them vulnerable to predators?

- Most children's literature depicts heteronormative families and relationships, yet people grow up to be LGBTQ+.
- When a child/teen is armed with information, they can stand up for themselves and prevent predatory relationships.
- Teens often explore different identities. Books and libraries are the safest way to do that.

NOTE: on petitions

"ProtectHB petition is to repeal the Book Review Committee and the FOTL petition is to prevent the privatization of the library."

* Dictionary definition: "Ban" means to "restrict access to something". HB Ordinance 4318 is a perfect example of banning books.