

February 11, 2022

Honorable Senator Adam Pugh
2300 N. Lincoln Blvd., Rm. 425
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Honorable Senator Dewayne Pemberton
2300 N. Lincoln Blvd., Rm. 429
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

RE: Senate Bill 1142 – Unnecessary Legislation Impacting Youth Wellness

Dear Senators Pugh and Pemberton,

The undersigned believe that Senate Bill 1142 is unnecessary, unduly burdensome on school administrators and educators, and is harmful to the overall wellness of our state's youth.

Senate Bill 1142 is not based on an existing issue resulting from the current school procedures in Oklahoma. Current law requires every school district to have a policy allowing for parental review of all curriculum. This piece of legislation is attempting to solve a problem that does not exist in our state.

Oklahoma continues to have many of the worst health indicator rankings in the nation and youth wellness is a key measured indicator. Senate Bill 1142 would censor vital books related to childhood development from school libraries. Limiting or preventing access to health resources from school libraries, one of the few trusted places many young Oklahomans have for seeking health education, is harmful to the overall wellness of our state's youth and our state's overall wellness ranking.

Adults in Oklahoma overwhelmingly support young people having access to factual, age-appropriate sexual health information and resources at school. It's important to remember that when young people do not have access to factual, age-appropriate resources to answer health related questions, they will increasingly turn to their peers and the internet where they are susceptible to misinformation and greater harm.

Furthermore, the proposed damages against educators: places an undue risk of financial burden on school administrators; will discourage qualified, top performing educators from joining the teaching profession in Oklahoma; and will deter current educators and administrators at a time when our state is facing a teacher shortage.

We must improve our state's youth wellness and Oklahoma's overall wellness ranking by rejecting policy measures that significantly limit a youth's access to health related resources. We must reject policy measures that deter top performing state educators. We, the undersigned, respectfully ask that you join us in opposing censorship of health related resources in our school libraries and decline to hear Senate Bill 1142.

[signatures/logos]