Parents Bill of Rights Act, and what it means for families across the country.

Over the past several years, parents witnessed the consequences of lessons taught in classrooms firsthand. Math scores declined by the largest margin ever, and reading scores plummeted to the lowest levels in over three decades. These results are devastating.

Teachers' unions and education bureaucrats work to push progressive politics in classrooms while keeping parents in the dark. The Parents Bill of Rights Act aims to end that and shine a light on what is happening in schools. This bill will reaffirm a parent's right to review course curriculum, meet with the child's teacher, and be heard at school board meetings without fear of reprisal.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle seem convinced Republicans are using this bill to punish teachers or push an extreme rightwing agenda. This is false.

Our education system is spiraling out of control as parents are pushed further outside the classroom. This bill will restore the role of parents in guiding their children's education and provide new mechanisms to promote parent-teacher partnerships.

When parents are involved in their child's education, students thrive. That is the guiding principle of this bill. With the Parents Bill of Rights Act, Republicans will help parents steer the education of their children back onto the correct path where they can learn the skills they need for a lifetime of success.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to H.R. 5, the politics over parents act.

First, let me be clear. House Democrats believe parental engagement is central to student success. Parental engagement in schools is closely linked to better student behavior, higher academic achievement, and enhanced social skills.

Unfortunately, the politics over parents act does not take meaningful steps to increase or support parental engagement. In fact, it lists so-called rights and then declares that this allows the parents to control what is taught. Let's be clear: There is nothing in the bill to give parents the right to dictate what their children are taught.

Instead, this bill is one of many attempts by Republican politicians to give a vocal minority the power to try to impose their beliefs on all parents and students. This extreme education agenda has real consequences for students and educators.

According to PEN America, over 2,500 books were banned in schools during the school year 2021–2022, and nearly 140 additional book bans have taken effect since July 2022.

Let me just list some of the books that Republican politicians have gotten banned under the guise of parental rights: "The Diary of a Young Girl," the stories of a Holocaust survivor, by Anne Frank; "The Kite Runner," a novel on the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, by Khaled Hosseini; "Beloved," a novel about slaves during the Civil War, by Toni Morrison; and on and on. Books like that have been banned because of efforts like what we have before us today.

Let's be clear. These books are taught at age-appropriate levels. If you have a problem with it, you should call the librarian. Yet, Republican politicians are actually having them removed from classrooms and school libraries.

Simply put, the politics over parents act is an educational gag order across the Nation which will prevent students from learning and prevent teachers from teaching. These efforts seek to score political points and scare parents into thinking that schools do not have their best interests at heart. Instead, we should be talking about the support that schools and families actually need to improve parent-teacher engagement.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on the politics over parents act and join House Democrats in an amendment in the nature of a substitute to deliver real solutions to build partnerships between schools and families.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Louisiana (Ms. LETLOW).

Ms. LETLOW. Mr. Chair, I rise today to join my voice with millions of American parents as the House considers H.R. 5, the Parents Bill of Rights Act.

H.R. 5 is about one simple and fundamental principle: Parents should always have a seat at the table when it comes to their child's education.

We believe that learning is a partnership between a family and their child's teachers. This bill is the vehicle by which we can put parents and educators together at the same table to have a productive dialogue.

This bill is not complex or complicated, nor should it be partisan or polarizing. Contrary to what you may hear from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, it is not an attack on our hardworking teachers, who will always be the heroes in my eyes. It is not an attempt to have Congress dictate the curriculum or determine the books in the library. Instead, this bill aims to bring more transparency and accountability to education, allowing parents to be informed and, when they have questions and concerns, to lawfully bring them to their local school boards.

Over the past 2 years, we have seen too many instances where rather than opening their doors to welcome parents in, instead slammed them shut and said that government bureaucrats know what is best for our children.

Parents across this country have overwhelmingly spoken out that they have not had a seat at the table because, at the end of the day, these are our children, not the government's.
Mr. Chair, I worked in education before I came to Congress, and I am also a mom. I have seen firsthand how when you educate a child, you give them a future.

We know that when parents are involved, it is the students who succeed. We also know that when a family is shut out of their child's education, it will lead to disastrous results.

Mr. Chair, let us give parents that voice in the learning process. Let schools open the doors and welcome them in as partners. Let us work to usher in a newer era of K–12 education. It is time for this body to take the approach that still sees parents, students, and educators?

Parents love teachers. Everybody loves teachers. Every parent has an "I love and remember a teacher" story. How disgraceful that we want to terminate the very people who love our children, keep them safe, and educate them for over 8 hours daily. Our teachers are sacrificial lambs.

You will never eliminate public schools. We will fight you as long as it takes. This is all that the little children who look like me have. Public schools are the bedrock of this Nation.

Let me tell you what a parent's bill of rights should include. I will call it the parents' 10 commandments:

Thou shalt offer parents the right to improve their education and job skills, love and respect every child's individuality, guarantee that every child's teacher will make a minimum of $60,000 a year.

Mr. FOXX. Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BEAN), chair of the Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Subcommittee.

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Chair, should parents have the right to be involved in their child's education?

That is the question before us. Seventy-two percent of Americans have answered "yes" to that question. Parents should be and want to be involved in their child's education.

According to numerous studies, students who have involved parents have better behavior, better grades, better attendance, and develop a lifelong love for their education. This is the key to long-term success.

Today, American parents are fed up, largely because they have experienced 2 years of school closures, misguided COVID-19 policies, remote learning, and a curriculum focused on what is woke rather than what is essential academic instruction. They have been branded "domestic terrorists" for speaking out at school boards. Some were even arrested for having the nerve to plead with school boards about the safety of their child at school.

Mr. Chair, it is time to re-welcome parents back into education. It is time for parents to have the right to know what is going on in American education today. That is why I—and I encourage everybody—to support H.R. 5, the Parents Bill of Rights Act, critical legislation that empowers parents and students to have the right to know what is going on in public education as the great equalizer of rights should include. I will call it the parents' 10 commandments:

Thou shalt restore the Child Tax Credit; provide free, hot breakfast and lunch; provide free pre-K and free community college.

Thou shalt end the school-to-prison pipeline; put a nurse in every school; offer after-school activities; provide intensive counseling services, particularly to address school shootings.

Thou shalt offer parents the right to improve their education and job skills, love and respect every child's individuality, guarantee that every child's teacher will make a minimum of $60,000 a year.

Mr. Chair, I urge all of my colleagues to re-welcome parents back into education. It is time for parents to have the right to know what is going on in American education today. That is why I—and I encourage everybody—to support H.R. 5, the Parents Bill of Rights Act, critical legislation that empowers parents and students to have the right to know what is going on in public education as the great equalizer for all students regardless of who they are or where they are from, essential to our communities, the economy, and our democratic Republic.

Please join me in rejecting this bill.

Mr. Chair, I include in the RECORD a statement from the National PTA in opposition to H.R. 5.
Dear Representative Bobby Scott: National PTA and our network of millions of parents and educators across the country urge you to support adoption of the Bonamici Substitute Amendment and oppose the underlying legislation, H.R. 5, on the House Floor tomorrow.

PTA opposes the underlying bill, H.R. 5, because it has the potential to cause significant harm to children and families. If passed as written, H.R. 5 could:

- Prevent mental health support for students and teachers;
- Limit access to learning-enhancing technology and educational materials;
- Lead to inappropriate and harmful book bans and censorship;
- Create confusion for school staff and burdensome opt-in requirements for families;
- Impair relationships between educators and parents; and
- Undermine efforts to create safe, welcoming, supportive, and inclusive learning environments for all students and families.

PTA supports Representative Bonamici’s Substitute Amendment to H.R. 5 as the ONLY PATH forward to ensuring supports and services are in place for true family engagement. We stand behind our National Standards for Family-School Partnerships that have been in place for over 20 years.

The Substitute Amendment provides the opportunity for meaningful and inclusive family engagement in K–12 education and if adopted would replace the current H.R. 5 and enable children’s public schools to:

- Create a parent coordinator position in public schools;
- Reinforce existing parents’ rights under federal law;
- Prohibit the federal government from curriculum censorship and banning books; and
- Invest in full-service community schools and School Engagement Centers Program (the new authorization level of $60 million would allow all states to participate).

As the Nation’s oldest and largest child advocacy association, we know what meaningful family engagement looks like and what parents want from their policymakers. We ask you to join us in supporting the Bonamici Substitute Amendment and opposing the underlying bill, H.R. 5 on the House Floor. We thank you for consideration of the Substitute Amendment and encourage committee and floor support to ensure that families are at the center of every decision.

Mr. Chair, quite simply, this bill is common sense. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation that ensures parents are at the center of their child’s educational experience.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chair, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO), the ranking member of the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Chair, I rise today in strong opposition to the politics over parents act as a member of the Education and the Workforce Committee, as a member of the LGBTQ community, and as a teacher.

As a teacher, I know of instances when government regulators have placed constraints when government regulators have placed constraints that debated, sometimes even so-called ‘Parents Bill of Rights’ laws that limit parents’ rights to be heard. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation that ensures parents are at the center of every decision.

Mr. Chair, I include in the RECORD a letter from a million MomsRising.

So-called ‘Parents Bill of Rights’ is all wrong for America’s moms, families—a toxic plan that will create more division, damage to our kids and communities.

Statement of Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner, Executive Director and CEO of MomsRising, the online and on-the-ground organization of more than one million parents and their families, on the so-called ‘Parents Bill of Rights’ (H.R. 5) House Republicans are poised to pass this week:

The badly named ‘Parents Bill of Rights’ the House GOP plans to vote on this week is all wrong for America’s moms, kids, families, and educators. It is a recipe for censorship, bullying and book bans, and for division based on race, sexual orientation, and gender identity, masquerading as a bill of rights. If it were to become law, the Parents Bill of Rights would create more division by pitting educators against parents. It would do enormous damage to our kids, schools and communities.

America’s moms want schools to be safe and inclusive and to value diversity; for parents to be respectful; and for educators to be able to be honest about their identities and allowed to teach our country’s truths, good and bad, and the values that got us to where we are today. We want our kids to learn about the history and obstacles faced, and overcome, by members of our Black, Brown, AAPI, Native American, immigrant, religious minority, LGBTQ, and others ‘vs. them’ and puts in place the caregiving and other supports that will allow all families to succeed. MomsRising has more than a million members and we have been working closely with moms in every state for more than a decade. What this country’s moms want from Congress is affordable child, elder and disability care; paid family and medical leave; fair pay; health care and medications we can afford; vastly improved maternal health care for all of us; the ability to make informed decisions about how many children to have; and laws that will end the scourge of gun violence and keep our children, streets, schools and communities safe.

“Coming soon, we will release the Moms Rising for Freedom Agenda with ten key policies lawmakers should support that MomsRising believes that moms across the Nation really want, instead of the divisive and harmful policies in the ‘Parents Bill of Rights.’ That is how we build society in which we can all flourish and thrive.”

Mr. TAKANO. In committee, my Republican colleagues have preached about parents’ God-given rights. I will tell you now that parents simply don’t have God-given right not to be physically or emotionally harmed.

As a teacher, I know of instances where children were cuffed by staff, and as a consequence those children faced severe punishment at home. One student was viciously beaten by his father and transferred out of a district after his family was informed that he was caught being physically affectionate with another boy.

Imagine the situation in which educators are placed when government requires them to out their student to an unsupportive family. I will tell you what happens to those kids:

- 73 percent of LGBTQ youth report anxiety.
- 58 percent of them report depression.
- 40 percent of homeless youth are LGBTQ, and
- 46 percent, nearly half of them, have serious concerns about their safety.

Good teachers care about their kids. Good teachers know that a relationship with parents is important. But when a home is not safe for LGBTQ kids, school becomes their safe place, and teachers need to be their cheerleaders, not their bullies.

This bill forces good teachers to do bad things. It alienates students from their parents. It outs kids. It forces kids back into the closet. It is a fundamental invasion of privacy that puts children in danger.

In the first 3 months that this Congress has been in session, this is what
Republicans have chosen to spend our time and taxpayer dollars on the so-called Parents Bill of Rights Act is the exact type of Big Government overreach our colleagues across the aisle proclaim they are against, and puts the control of their pursuit of political gain on the backs of students and teachers.

This is worse than simply bad legislation. It is a concerted attack on children, parents, and teachers.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on the bill.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG).

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 5, the Parents Bill of Rights Act. I thank Representative LETLOW and Chair FOXX for their leadership in defending the God-given rights of parents and protecting kids as well.

Parental involvement in their children’s education is paramount to a student’s success. However, in recent years, we have seen a push by some to exclude parents from their children’s education. This is why I recently introduced the PROTECT Kids Act with Senator TIM SCOTT which has been included as an amendment to H.R. 5.

The PROTECT Kids Act would require any Department of Education-funded elementary or middle school to seek and acquire parental consent before changing their child’s pronouns or any preferred name on any school form. This provision is straightforward, common sense, and will safeguard the critical relationship between parents, schools, and children.

When a child goes on a field trip or fails a test, their parents are told and are often required to sign an acknowledgment or a permission slip. Why should relatively small things require notification but something as significant as a child’s pronouns or a change in accommodations can be withheld from the people who raise and love them?

Recent polling shows this has the broad support of the American people. Three-quarters of Americans believe schools should be required to obtain consent from parents.

Parents have a fundamental right to raise and educate their children how they choose. We must pass the Parents Bill of Rights Act to help mitigate issues of the nationalizing and to support parents who need the support to do right by their kids as well.

On this side of the aisle, we believe this is the right way to go, and we believe that in the end it will promote education, family, and individualism as well.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. JAYAPAL), who is a member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Chair, Congress should be supporting parents, students, and teachers, not advancing this politics over parents act which would punish teachers for giving history lessons, ban books, and sow hate and divisiveness against trans kids.

Parents have the utmost confidence in their child’s teachers. When it comes to writing curricula, 76 percent of parents trust their child’s school. But when it comes to writing laws, political gimmicks, like this bill, keep them from saying the same thing about this very body.

Instead of manufacturing outrage over curricula and books, why don’t we just listen?

Mr. Chairman, 84 percent of parents would rather Congress give free school meals, and 79 percent want support for mental health services. In a survey of parents’ top concerns by The Pew Charitable Trusts, 40 percent said they were extremely or very worried about their children struggling with depression, 35 percent said they were concerned about bullying, and 22 percent were worried about their kids being shot.

Not a single one of those issues on the top list of parental concerns is addressed in this bill. So don’t tell me this is a parents’ bill of rights. This is not addressing gun violence. It is not addressing mental health. It is not addressing childcare, pre-K, and all of the other things that would be a part of a parents’ bill of rights.

Instead, we are spending time on a bill that sows doubt about public education and teachers and also targets our very vulnerable trans kids who are absolutely no threat to anyone in this body.

Please understand that the provisions in this bill that out trans kids are cruel and dangerous. I say that as a mom of a trans kid. I was very embracing to my daughter when she came out, but not every family is. The reality is that 75 percent of trans kids experience discrimination and harassment.

So why do Republicans want schools to require outing LGBTQ students? That does not make them better students.

Congress has the constitutional authority to write laws. What a mockery and betrayal of that duty it would be to pass this stunt of a bill that doesn’t address a single priority of parents, bans books, undermines teachers, and hurts our kids.

Democrats are the party of parents and families. We reject this bill, and we commit to fighting for childcare, for universal pre-K, for a child tax credit, and for the association people to be free for who they are and express themselves.

Mr. Chair, I include in the RECORD two letters. One is from the National Education Association and one is from the American Federation of Teachers.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the 3 million members of the National Education Association, dedicated and trusted professionals who teach and support nearly 50 million students in public schools across America, we urge you to vote NO on H.R. 5. Votes into this bill with extreme amendments that would create a national private school voucher program, may be included in the NEA Report Card for the 118th Congress.

H.R. 5 is unnecessary and ignores the partnerships that exist between parents and educators. Parents and students already have the right and the opportunity to partner with educators to ensure students have the learning opportunities, resources, and support for success. Across America, parents are strategizing with educators when children face hurdles and celebrating with them when students achieve milestones, volunteering at schools, chaperoning field trips, leading PTAs, mentoring students, and actively engaging in many other ways with students and educators.

In a recent Gallup poll, 80 percent of parents with children in public K-12 schools said they were satisfied with their children’s education. Instead of building on what exists, H.R. 5 would stoke racial and social animosity. Instead of bringing us together to focus on what will really help students—an inspiring, inclusive, and diverse curriculum that prepares them for the future in schools that are safe from gun violence— H.R. 5 would encourage parents to view educators as the enemy. The other provisions in this bill, which mindset hurts students, disregards educators’ professionalism, and diverts our attention from a basic American value: All students— no matter their race, ZIP Code, gender orientation, sexual identity, or background—deserve the support, tools, and opportunity to learn and succeed.

H.R. 5 dismisses educators’ education, experience, and dedication.

The legislation tells educators that, despite the expertise and knowledge that has shaped America, or tell stories of honesty at history and the difficult events that have shaped us, our nation, and our democracy.

The legislation’s library requirements, including the mandate that school libraries be required to include the mandate that school libraries be required to include extreme censorship that the law is already standard practice. The real aim of the legislation is to elevate the voices and power of a few who wish to foist their ideas about what should be read and taught onto other people’s children. This is already leading to shocking outcomes.

The PEN America Index of School Book Bans lists more than 2,500 instances of book banning in the United States over the past year, 2022, affecting more than 1,600 titles. Affected books are most often those that look honestly at history and the difficult events that have shaped our nation. The struggle for self-acceptance in hostile or oppressive circumstances. The banned or censored books include: Small Talks, a novel about the experience of the author’s father, a Holocaust survivor; The Bluest Eye, by Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison, about a girl of Native-American heritage coping with the disappearance of her mother; and
Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and her Family’s Fight for Desegregation, by Duncan Tomori, about a family’s efforts to desegregate California schools.

We support our lawmakers who want to see our communities thrive. We are proud of young people to succeed in our diverse Nation and interconnected world by removing books from library shelves and curricula. We prepare them for the future by feeding the seeds for lifelong curiosity and growth. H.R. 5 will impose several unfunded mandates on already overburdened schools and school districts.

Committee-passed amendments to H.R. 5 include one that would require a "review period," during which parents could review any materials to be used in the next three weeks, or that have been used in the past. Districts would be required to fund the money, and the time, for this mandate within budgets and school days that are already stretched thin. H.R. 5 suggests the federal government should be a national school board.

The bill would undermine local control and educators’ autonomy to do their jobs by imposing a national curriculum as a national school board. In fact, the legislation actually undermines the stated goal of H.R. 5. By utilizing the federal government to pave the way for what books should be part of the curriculum and in libraries, H.R. 5 suppresses the voices of many parents and local communities that want their children to receive an honest and accurate education. While we urge a NO vote on H.R. 5, we support any amendments that highlight the many real needs schools face, including those that: provide more resources for school counselors and parent engagement; ensure books remain available for any student who wants to read them; highlight H.R. 5’s true costs to local schools and ensure those costs are not passed on to already resource-deprived schools; and remove extraneous requirements.

We ask you to vote YES on the following amendments:

No. 1 by Rep. Bacon (No. 52 in Rules): Requires Local Education Agencies to provide parents of a student in elementary or secondary school with the number of school counselors in the school; No. 2 by Rep. Foxx (No. 45 in Rules): Requires a GAO report on the cost of H.R. 5’s requirements to State Education Agencies, Local Education Agencies, and schools; No. 3 by Reps. Garamendi and D’Esposito (No. 37 in Rules): Provides that nothing in H.R. 5 or its amendments be construed as authorizing parents to deny any student who is not their own child from accessing any books or other reading materials otherwise available in the school library.

No. 12 by Rep. Jacobs (No. 4 in Rules): Strikes “at no cost” in the bill to ensure that some requirements in H.R. 5 do not fall on overburdened schools that already lack sufficient resources to meet the needs of students.

No. 13 by Reps. Jacobs (No. 6 in Rules): Strikes the provisions relating to reviewing professional development materials in sections 104 and 107.

We oppose amendments that target transgender youth, eradicate inclusive curricula, potentially open our public schools to frivolous lawsuits, create a national private school voucher program, and eliminate the U.S. Department of Education.

We ask you to vote NO on the following amendments:

No. 2 by Rep. Foxx (No. 45 in Rules): Manager’s amendment to the bill that also directs courts conducting the test to evaluate laws involving parents’ rights.

No. 3 by Rep. Boebert (No. 46 in Rules): Targets already vulnerable transgender youth by amending Section 104 to include Parent’s Right to Know if their child’s school operates, sponsors, or facilitates athletic programs or activities that permit a person whose biological sex is male to participate in an athletic program or activity that is designated for women or girls.

No. 4 by Rep. Boebert (No. 5 in Rules): Targets already vulnerable transgender youth by amending Section 104 to include Parent’s Right to Know if their child’s school allows a person whose biological sex is male to use restrooms or changing rooms designated for women or girls.

No. 6 by Rep. Crane (No. 54 in Rules): Adds a private right of action for parents beyond current law that may lead to more frequent lawsuits, costing taxpayers more.


No. 15 by Reps. Massey, Boebert, Gaetz, and Self (No. 7 in Rules): Adds a sense of Congress regarding the Department of Education and the Secretary of Education to operate or administer any office or program related to elementary or secondary education should be terminated on or before December 31, 2023.

No. 19 by Rep. Roy (No. 57 in Rules): Creates a non-refundable voucher program, decimating Title I and taking public funds out of public schools to boost private schools that are not held to any of the requirements included in the underlying bill.

No. 20 by Rep Roy (No. 61 in Rules): Makes all funds available under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 block grants, which will lead to cuts to key programs serving students.

Educators are devoted to partnering with parents to discover students’ interests and unlock their potential. Let’s not avoid spending time on divisive issues that do not contribute to student success. Instead, please focus on getting students the individualized instruction they need in keeping guns out of schools, and addressing educator shortages. If Congress joins with parents and educators, we can support learning by ensuring that students across our great Nation—no matter their race, background, sexual orientation, or gender identity—have the resources, one-on-one attention, and well-rounded curricula they need and deserve. Please vote NO on H.R. 5.

Sincerely,

MARC EGAN
Director of Government Relations, National Education Association

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

WASHINGTON, DC, March 23, 2023

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the 1.7 million members of the American Federation of Teachers, I write to express our views on H.R. 5, the Parents Bill of Rights Act. Increasing students’ access to mental health professionals; Enacting gun safety measures that keep our kids safe and protect parents from the unimaginable; Allowing increasing starting teachers’ pay to $69,000 a year, so we can start addressing the teacher shortage;
Increasing funding to support our most vulnerable schools and students.
Helping school districts recruit and train diverse teachers to alleviate the teacher shortage.
Increasing students’ access to healthy meals.
We will outline our positions on the amendments made in order in a subsequent message to the full House later today.
We want to ensure any action Congress takes supports, not undermines, the capacity of schools and educators to fulfill their responsibilities. And that is what parents and voters want too. Our recent polling demonstrates clearly that voters overwhelmingly believe that voting is being polarized and division in schools. Instead, voters favor solutions like investing in public schools and providing educators with the resources they need to create safe and welcoming environments; boosting academic skills; and paving pathways to career, college and beyond.
We are glad Republicans are thinking about parents and want to address the issues keeping them up at night, but H.R. 5 fails to deliver on what parents want and kids need to succeed. Our students and their families face real-world challenges that the House should be focusing on today, working to advance solutions that protect our Nation’s future, value our parents and support our educators. Unfortunately, H.R. 5 does not meet that standard, and, at a minimum, it must be amended to include the Bonamici substitute.
Thank you for considering our views on these issues.
Sincerely,
RANDI WINGERTEN,
President, American Federation of Teachers.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. MILLER), who is the vice chair of the Education and Workforce Committee.

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. Mr. Chair, I thank Chairwoman FOXX for yielding, and I thank my Republican colleagues for taking up this very important bill.

Mr. Chair, there has been a push by powerful teachers’ unions, leftwing politicians, and others concerning the Biden Justice Department to silence parents throughout our country. The Biden administration used the FBI—the most powerful law enforcement agency in the world—to intimidate parents and students. The Biden administration pushed to make its most marginalized children less safe.

Parents’ rights are nonnegotiable. Parents are the decisionmakers for their child’s education, which includes their child’s curriculum. Parents want schools focused on reading, writing, and math, not woke politics. The radical left in our country seeks to silence parents and use public schools and colleges to indoctrinate our youth. They don’t want to teach children to think. They want to teach them what to think.

I am grateful that several of my bills are included in the Parents Bill of Rights Act to protect children from radical gender ideology and to ensure parents are informed when information is being taught to their children through surveys or documents. Parents have the right to know what is being taught to their child, and they have the right to opt their child out of any discussion about sexual orientation and gender ideology.

Mr. Chair, I am proud House Republicans are keeping our commitment to fight for parental rights, and I urge my colleagues to support them.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Chair, I rise today in opposition as someone who has actually been a student in our public school system within the last decade. I rise as someone who is the son of a public school educator, special education teacher of 37 years—love you, Mom. I also rise as someone who sat on my local school board for 2 years as a student representative.

This bill is modeled after one that I know very well—Florida’s Parental Rights in Education law. Most of us know it as “Don’t Say Gay.” “Don’t Say Gay” infringes on parents’ rights, including LGBTQ+ and supportive parents.

Bills like this make schools more hostile, and make no mistake, it results in hate, bigotry, and, yes, sometimes death of our students in schools. Republican lawmakers won’t even allow my amendment to be considered that protects the First Amendment rights of parents. We want to talk about parental rights. What about their First Amendment right to fight for their children, LGBTQ+ children, who are fighting for gender-affirming and life-saving care?

One of my colleagues brought this up, but this bill focuses on parents’ rights, but what about the rights of our students? What about the rights of our young people? Why are my Republican colleagues not advocating for our students? Is it because they know that the majority of young people despise legislation like this and do not support legislation like this that is bigoted?

Is it because this generation is the most progressive generation this country has ever seen because they want a world where everybody can succeed, where we see the world through the eyes of the most vulnerable?

See, the party is branded on freedom and liberty, but what about the freedom and liberties of young people and students who actually sit in the classroom?

I mean, if Republican lawmakers cared so much about what is happening in our schools, they would focus on feeding kids so we can ensure that everyone can learn on a full stomach.

If Republican lawmakers cared so much about what is happening in our schools, they would believe that students have updated technology, teachers have the resources they need so students can actually learn.

If Republican lawmakers cared so much about what is happening in our schools, they would believe that the kids who are gunned down in their classrooms? The leading cause of death for young people in this country is gun violence.

None of that is in this bill. This bill is just a vehicle for hate and political nonsense, pushing a chosen wedge issue. It is not about policy; it is about politics. It is not about freedom and liberty. It is about the fear of a problem that doesn’t exist.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLS).

Mr. MILLS. Mr. Chair, I rise today to state the obvious: There is no room for woke ideologies, sexualization of our children, and CRT in our classrooms.

The legislation before us makes a few things clear, but the main point is this: Parents’ rights matter. American citizens rose up and demanded a seat at the table when it comes to their child’s education and curriculum, and they did that by electing a GOP majority in the House.

I thank our leadership for bringing this legislation to the floor, and as a father, I want to make it a priority that we state that parents can and should protect their children. This bill shows parents have the right to show the American people we stand with parents, not educational bureaucrats who want to restrict our understanding and visibility of the issues.

These parents are not to be labeled as domestic terrorists. They are proud parents who want their children to succeed and not to be indoctrinated.

Mr. Chair, I stand in great support of H.R. 5.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chair, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. CLARK), the Democratic whip.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentleman from Virginia for yielding, and I include in the Record a letter from the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights.


To: The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
From: John Hope Franklin, Chairman, Board of Directors

RE: Support the Rights of all Students and Parents

H. Res. 219, the Bill of Rights for Students and Parents sets forth our public school system by supporting our students and Parents sets forth a vision respecting and honoring the dignity and worth of every child—a vision supported by the overwhelming majority of parents in the United States, and the 223 undersigned organizations, we urge you to support the rights and inclusion of all students and parents in our public school system by supporting H. Res. 219, the Bill of Rights for Students and Parents, and opposing H.R. 5, the Parents Bill of Rights Act.

As the civil and human rights community, we have fought for more than 100 years for the rights of all students and parents to attend and be fully included in well-resourced public schools that prepare them for their futures. The Bill of Rights for Students and Parents sets forth a vision respecting and honoring the dignity and worth of every child—a vision supported by the overwhelming majority of parents in the United States.

In contrast, H.R. 5 undermines the relationship between parents and teachers, to facilitate book banning, and to make our most marginalized children less safe.

During this time in which proponents of discrimination and exclusion are creating
policies and legislation to harm students and undermine the learning environment for everyone, support for developing supportive, inclusive, safe, and responsive public schools could not be more important. In a recent national survey, 80 percent or more of parents said that it was very or extremely important that their child be honest, ethical, hardworking, and self-disciplined, to those in need, and accepting of people who are different from them. It is these parental values that are reflected in H.Res. 219. No matter our color, background, or who we are, we need to have an education that imparts honesty about who we are, integrity in how we treat others, and think critically about the world around them.

H.R. 5 seeks to create detrimental harm to our next generation, where children, especially those from the complicated and difficult history of our Nation, and damage parent and teacher relationships. Instead of promoting the values and priorities that children need, the bill would undermine important public health and child well-being data by effectively eliminating anonymous surveys of students; would harm those most vulnerable LGBTQ+ youth who are unable to come out to even their own parents by forcing them to remain in the closet; would enact a small group of activists who are using book bans to selectively stamp out the perspectives of Black people, LGBTQ+ people, and other historically marginalized groups, and would bog schools down with reporting and commenting requirements that bear no relationship to proven parent and family engagement practices.

We ask that you strongly support H.Res. 219, strongly oppose H.R. 5, and reject attacks on the rights of all students and parents to fully include all of our most under-resourced public schools that prepare them for their futures. If you have any questions, please reach out to Liz King, senior program director at The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights.

Sincerely,

National (135): The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights: A Way Home America; AACTE (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education); Act To Change Advocacy Institute; Advocates for Youth; AIHED; American Association of University Women; American Atheists; American Civil Liberties Union; American Humanists Association; American Library Association; American School Counselor Association; Aplyar for Practical Support; Arab American Institute (AAI); Asian Americans Advancing Justice A AJC; Athlete Ally; Autistic Self Advocacy Network; Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law; Bend the Arc; Jewish Action; Campaign for Our Shared Future; Campus Pride; Care in Action; Catholics for Choice; Center for American Progress; Center for Applied Transgender Studies; Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP); Center for LGBT Engagement & Research (CLEAR); CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers; Collective Power for Reproductive Justice; Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates; Faith in Public Education; Fairness & Defense Fund; EducateUS; SIECUS In Action; Education Leaders of Color (EliLoC);

Education Reform Now; Empowering Pacific Islander Communities; End Rape On Campus; Equal Rights Advocates.

Equity Federation; Equity Forward; Equal Rights Advocates; Education & Technical Assistance (EDIT) Program; Family Equality; Feminist Campus; Fenway Institute; First Focus Centers; FOPGE; Girls Inc.; GLAAD; GLBTQ Legal Advocates and Defenders (GLAD); GLSEN; Grandmothers for Reproductive Rights; Hindu American Foundation; Foster Liberty Education; Houston Area Urban League; Human Rights Campaign; Human Rights First; If/When/How; Lawyering for Reproductive Justice; Impact.

In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda; Indivisible; interACT: Advocates for Intersex Youth; Interfaith Alliance; Japanese American Citizens League; Juvenile Law Center; KIPP Public Schools; Labor Council for Latin American Advancement; Lambda Legal; LatinoJustice PRLDEF; Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law; Lawyers for Good Government; League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC); Matthew Shepard Foundation; Reproductive Health Access für Move- ment Advancement Project; NARAL Pro-Choice America; National Association of School Psychologists; National Black Justice Coalition; National Center for Learning Disabilities.

National Center for Lesbian Rights; Na- tional Domestic Workers Alliance; Advoc- acy, and Community Empowerment (Na- tional PLACE); National Center for Transgender Equality; National Center for Youth Law; National Council of Asian Pacific Americans; National Disability Rights Network (NDRN); National Domestic Work- ers Alliance; National Education Associa- tion; National Equality March; Na- tional Hispanic Media Coalition; National LGBT Cancer Network; National Organiza- tion for Women; National Urban League; Na- tional Women's Law Center; New American Leaders Action Fund; New Generation Equity; Oregonians; People For the American Way; PFLAG National; Physicians for Re- productive Health.

Planned Parenthood Federation of America; Plume Health; Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK); Public Citizen; Public Justice; Red for Ed Action Coalition; School Board Partners; Sexual Violence Pre- vention Association (SVPA); SIECUS: Sex Ed for Social Change; Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF); SPAN Parent Advocacy Network; SPLC Ac- tion Fund; Stand for Children; Tahrih Justi- tice Center; The Advocates for Human Rights; The Arc of the United States; The Education Trust; The Personal Stories Project; The Sikh Coalition.

The Women's Athlete: True Colors United; Trust Women; UnidosUS; Uni- tarian Universalist Association; United States of Women (USW); URGE: United for Reproductive Justice; VoteYourChoice; VoteVoter Choice; Vote Latino; Wayfinder Foundation; We Testify; Whole Woman's Health; Whole Woman's Health Alliance; Woodhill Freedom Foundation; YWCA USA; State/Local (96): A Woman's Choice of Charlotte; A Woman's Choice of Greensboro; A Woman's Choice of Jacksonville; A Woman's Choice of Raleigh; Acadiana Queer Collec- tive; Aces NYC; Action Together New Jer-sey; African American Office of Gay Con- cerns; AIDS Foundation Chicago; Alliance for Reproductive Rights; Black Gay Men's Forum; Avow Texas; Bans Off Miami; Black Californians United for Early Care and Education; Carolina for All; Central Florida Coalition for the Homeless; Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights; Cobalt.

Democrats for Education Reform DC (DFER DC); Democrats for Education Re- form Massachusetts; Democrats for Edu- cation Reform New York; Detroit Disability Rights Center; Donald Patton; Dutchess County Pro- gressive Action Alliance; Education Reform New York; Education Reform New CT; Education Respect Action; Equality California; Equality Illinois; Equality South Dakota; Equality Virginia; Equality Maine; Faces of Fallen Fathers; FL National Organization for Women; Florida Urban Coalition; Florida Health Justice Project.

Forever Caring Evonné; Gender Justice; GLSEN New Mexico; Greater Milwaukee United; Greater Ohio; Greater Organizing for Women for Public Schools; Independent Voters of Illi- nois-Independent Precinct Organization; Indivisible DuPage; Indivisible Georgia Coa- alition; Indivisible Miami; Jane's Due Process; JASMYN, Inc.; Lafayette Citizens Against Censorship; Latino Memphis; Learning Rights Law Center; Los Angeles LGBT Cen- ter; Louisiana Citizens Against Censorship; Louisiana Coalition for Reproductive Free- dom; Louisiana Progress; Louisiana Trans Advocates; Maine Parent Federation; Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition; Mazzoni Center; Michigan Alliance for Special Education; Michigan Education Justice Coalition; Missouri Health Care for All; NASD; National Council of Jew- ews in Self Defense; New York State Community Schools Coalition; North Carolina Justice Center; OutFront Minnesota; OutNebraska; Parent Education Organizing Council; Patterson Alliance; Patterson Education Foundation; PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education); Pride Action Tank; Pro Choice Missouri; Pro-Choice North Caro- lina.

Progress Florida; Queer Northshore; Red Family, a project of North Jersey Pride; Reproductive Freedom Acadia; Save Our Schools NJ; SHERO Mississippi; Silver State Equity-Nevada; Solid Foundation Youth Outreach; Southern Echo Inc.; St. Tammany Library Alliance; The Ezekiel Project; The Parents' Place of MD; The Urban League of Philadelphia; The Womxn Project; The Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh; Urban League of Middle Tennessee; Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chair- man, I am the proud mom of three. Altogether, I have 36 cumulative school years under my belt, and I served on a school board for 6 of those fighting for parents and for kids.

I speak from experience when I call on this Chamber to oppose the GOP’s politics over parents act. Once again, the majority is showing us how out of touch they are with American families. They talk about wokeism, even though they struggle to define it, but even if it means, but let me tell you, par- ents in this country are wide awake.

They wake up every day and do the best they can to provide for their families. They wake up and they want great schools, where every child can learn and excel. Parents want afford- able childcare. They know that is the beginning of a great education. Right now parents are spending nearly a quarter of their family budget on childcare alone, and this is when they can find it at all.

Congress had a chance to cut those costs for families. Every single House
Republican voted no. That is politics over parents. Parents know that building a better future means teaching our country’s history. They know we have to address our teacher shortage, but demonizing educators, banning books like “To Kill a Mockingbird,” is politics over parents.

Parents know that taking care of a sick child shouldn’t cost them their paychecks. They should not have to send that child to school sick because they don’t have paid leave. The United States is the only of the only developed countries in the world without paid family leave. Every single House Republican voted against this basic benefit. That is politics over parents.

Moms and dads want schools and communities to be safe. They do not want their children shot while they are in school. Just yesterday, Denver families faced the horror of yet another school shooting. House Republicans refuse to enact commonsense reforms. Why? Politics.

How about something as basic as feeding our children? No. House Republicans voted against the child tax credit. They voted to slash food stamps and eliminate free school lunches. Once again, politics over parents.

There is a shameless hypocrisy of talking about parents’ rights as the GOP strips away America’s rights to decide if and when they are going to have children.

This is not that. Where do they get this? They get this from federal, state and local lawmakers. This bill would lead to more education being taken out of classroom shelves and will therefore limit access to education for millions of kids across the country. From national polling we know that the top priorities identified by the vast majority of families are the safety of their children while at school and the urgent need for mental health supports. This bill would lead to parents losing their voice in these arguments, they are not really discussing what is actually in this legislation.

This flimsy language of “parental rights and freedom” hides the sinister fact of this legislative text. If you notice in these arguments, they are not really discussing what is actually in this legislation.

This bill has nothing to do with parent rights and everything to do with the radical culture wars that serve as a distraction from what our students’ really need to recover from the pandemic. This bill would lead to more education being taken out of classroom shelves and will therefore limit access to education for millions of kids across the country. From national polling we know that the top priorities identified by the vast majority of families are the safety of their children while at school and the urgent need for mental health supports. This bill fails to address either of these issues and therefore is clearly not intended for the millions of families who have been demanding leadership from federal, state and local lawmakers.

One of the highest rates of youth homelessness is in the LGBT community from parents who want to kick their children out in households that may be unstable or abusive. For so many children of abuse, school is their only safe place to be.

Before they claim that this is not about banning books and not about harming the LGBT community, let’s just look at the impacts of similar Republican legislation that has already passed on the State level.

Look at these books that have already been removed from school shelves. The “Lifes of Parks” this apparently is too woke by the Republican Party. “Song of Solomon” is unacceptable to Republican politics. Forty percent of banned books reported are significantly addressing and specifically addressing LGBT issues.

To say and talk about government control and freedom, this Republican bill is asking the government to force the outing of LGBT people before they are ready.

Talking about the rights of parents, the National Parents Union is here in this gallery today saying: Don’t do this.

Mr. Chair, I include in the RECORD a letter where the National Parents Union is asking the Republican Party to: “Keep culture wars out of classrooms. Our children need urgent and aggressive educational solutions. . . .”

The NATIONAL PARENTS UNION ISSUES STATEMENT CONCERNING THE INTRODUCTION OF THE PARENTS BILL OF RIGHTS BY CHAIR FOXX, SPEAKER MCCARTHY, AND HOUSE GOP

March 1, 2023—Boston, MA—The National Parents Union, released a statement following a press conference spearheaded by the Workforce Committee Chair Virginia Foxx, Speaker Kevin McCarthy, and members of the House Republican Conference.

Today, Chairwoman Foxx, of the House of Representatives Education and Workforce Committee, released a new bill that claims to be a Parents Bill of Rights. A true Parents Bill of Rights can only be developed following an extensive process that includes bringing together a broad spectrum of parents representing every intersectionality of the modern American family.

Nowhere in this Parents Bill of Rights does it guarantee parents that their student will have access to a high quality education that prepares them for a life of opportunity. In fact, this faux Bill of Rights glosses over the issues identified as the most important issues facing our children: school safety, the mental health crisis impacting students, and aggressively focusing on addressing the academic challenges that have the potential to hinder our children from achieving economic mobility and competing for the jobs of the future.

This bill has nothing to do with parent rights and everything to do with the radical culture wars that serve as a distraction from what our students’ really need to recover from the pandemic. This bill would lead to more education being taken out of classroom shelves and will therefore limit access to education for millions of kids across the country. From national polling we know that the top priorities identified by the vast majority of families are the safety of their children while at school and the urgent need for mental health supports. This bill fails to address either of these issues and therefore is clearly not intended for the millions of families who have been demanding leadership from federal, state and local lawmakers.

We need to be a Parents Bill of Rights in a way that guarantees student progress and addresses the crises that our schools and families face across the country.

This is not that.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Chair, I also include in the RECORD a letter from the American Library Association coming out against this Republican proposal.


Re H.R. 5, “Parents Bill of Rights Act””—OPPOSE.

Hon. Kevin McCarthy, Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. Hakim Jeffries, Democratic Leader, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER MCCARTHY AND LEADER JEFFRIES: The American Library Association (“ALA”) writes to express our opposition to certain provisions of H.R. 5 (Parents Bill of Rights Act) and to urge a NO vote on H.R. 5.

Unquestionably, parents should have a voice in their children’s education. However, we must oppose H.R. 5’s school library provisions, which ironically would lead to more
government interference in family decisions regarding voluntary reading. These provisions:

- The bill’s school library provisions are unnecessary and unwarranted.

The bill’s provisions appear to be a solution in search of a problem. We are not aware of any situations where parents were not allowed access to the school library’s materials. It is standard practice in today’s school libraries to maintain online catalogs of their library materials and make such catalogs available to parents. In a parent–child relationship, parents and school librarians can choose to engage with partners in support of the student’s education and fostering a love of reading. That is precisely why school librarians have chosen their profession.

Furthermore, these provisions are unnecessary. As described above, school libraries provide access to a variety of age-appropriate materials. Notably, these are not mandatory instructional materials, but voluntary choices for student-directed reading. If a student in a particular book, they can simply choose another book.

The bill’s school library provisions would create a catalyst for more book banning and censorship.

We are very concerned about the potential negative unintended consequences of book banning and censorship of viewpoints if these federal requirements are imposed on local schools. The federal government should not dictate which materials local school libraries can or cannot offer. Indeed, current federal law prohibits the federal government from exercising “any direction, supervision, or control [. . .] over the selection or content of library resources” by local schools (20 U.S.C. 3403(b)). However, the school library provisions of H.R. 5 would expand federal involvement in that quintessentially local decision and invite more attempts to censor information and ban books.

Imposing new federal regulation—including a federal mandate for local schools to adopt new policies—would be weaponized by those who wish to censor what other parents’ children can read. The sad reality is that an increasing number of state and local politicians in recent years have acquiesced to extreme and unwise reading choices, and we fear that censorship may become even more prevalent if these provisions are enacted.

We have already seen how destructive censorship can be with the banning of books in many communities. Book bans now include many shocking examples, including the banning of children’s books that feature contributions to society by individuals like Condoleezza Rice, Rosa Parks, and Malala Yousafai. We cannot support provisions that will, even if unintentionally, lead to greater censorship and the banning of children’s books that contain subjects such as the contributions of these historic figures.

The bill’s school library provisions would create unfunded federal mandates and regulation where none are needed, at the cost of educating students. These unfunded mandates would be another distraction from schools’ fundamental work to educate students. These same provisions would hand the federal Education Department new, broad authority to defund schools deemed to have inadequately complied with these new federal regulations. If enacted, these provisions would take dollars that would be used to pay librarians, teachers, and require that they instead be spent on administrators, bureaucrats, and paperwork—to the detriment of the students our schools should be focused on serving.

CONCLUSION

We believe that parents should be partners in their children’s education. However, H.R. 5’s school library provisions do nothing to advance that partnership. Instead, they would create unnecessary and unfunded federal mandates on local school libraries that likely would result in more government censorship of reading choices.

Congress should support freedom for parents and students to choose what they want to read. Inspired by the wisdom of our country’s Founders, the First Amendment must be our guide star. If anyone is to tell a child that they can’t read a book, it should be the child’s parent, not a politician. Congress should support students by strengthening school libraries and protecting the freedom to read—not imposing more bureaucratic burdens and invasions into school libraries.

We are confident that parents want more books, not fewer, in their children’s school libraries.

Thank you for your consideration. If we can provide more information, please contact Gavin Baker.

Sincerely,

ALAN S. INOUYE, Ph.D.,
Senior Director, Public Policy & Government Relations
American Library Association

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Chair, when I talk about these provisions, I can say what my progressive values are, and that is freedom over fascism.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Chairman, first I thank Congresswoman LETTLOW for introducing this important piece of legislation and Chairwoman FOXX for her steady and unwavering leadership, guiding the Education and the Workforce Committee through a 16-hour debate, ending in a 2:23 a.m. vote a few weeks ago to pass this out of committee.

This bill ensures that parents stay at the center of their children’s education, regardless of whether that education occurs at home or in a public school system or anywhere in between. Until we can get the Federal Government completely out of K–12 education, Federal legislation shoring up the rights of parents is absolutely necessary.

H.R. 5, known as the Parental Bill of Rights Act, will keep parents and families at the forefront of their child’s educational journey. It will also strengthen those critical partnerships between parents and willing educators. The beneficiary of such partnerships will undoubtedly be the schoolchildren nationwide.
For generations, our classrooms have been a sacred place, a place where children dig in to understand this world and how it works, where they discover their passions and the reason for their creation, and where they prepare for a life dedicated to those passions.

I know this firsthand because before I entered my legal career, I worked in a public school system for multiple years. I married a public educator. About 9 years ago, I helped to start and run an education foundation that supports teachers in a rural public school district who teach with innovation and passion. Currently, I have four children donning the doors of that very school system, a choice my wife and I proudly make.

However, public schoolrooms should not be a place for advancing personal agendas or political propaganda. The role of our public educators is to educate, not to indoctrinate. Although the overwhelming majority of educators that I represent in east Texas thankfully understand this, it seems to me that in so many other corners of this country, many others have forgotten this or perhaps they have just simply forsaken this on purpose. In either case, as discussed by this Congress to stand firmly with parents in their partnership with educators.

Neither parents nor educators are the enemy. The enemy here is an unchecked system and political agenda that excludes one of those two essential parties necessary for the proper education of students; namely, the parents.

In 1925, the Supreme Court unanimously held that "the parental right to guide one's child intellectually and religiously is a most substantial part of the liberty and freedom of a parent." This concept is nothing new. We are talking about the fundamental rights of parents. Parents should be at the center of the education of their children, not the Federal Government.

As a member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, I will continue to fight to keep the Federal Government out of our children's educational journey while working to increase the voice of our parents and families.

As a member of that committee, I will also continue to applaud the dedicated work of so many educators in this country who have been doing the right thing by both parents and students for decades. For those educators and school districts, this legislation changes little; but for those who see parents as the enemy, this legislation changes much.

Unfortuately, this legislation, young and impressionable students will be safeguarded from propaganda and undue influence from those who should be educating but who have instead chosen to deviate from this responsibility to pursue a political agenda.

Nearly a century later after the Supreme Court weighed in on this issue, I am proud to stand here in support of the Parental Bill of Rights Act, which will reinforce the fundamental rights of parents and guardians to make the decision that is best for their families and their children's academic career.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES), the Democratic leader.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Chair, I thank the distinguished gentleman from the great Commonwealth of Virginia for yielding and for his leadership.

Mr. Chair, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 5, legislation brought to us by the extreme MAGA Republicans that will put politics over parents.

This legislation has nothing to do with parental involvement, parental engagement, or parental empowerment. It has everything to do with jamming the extreme MAGA Republican ideology down the throats of the children and the parents of the United States of America.

Now, House Democrats believe that every single child should have access to a high-quality fully engaged education.

House Democrats believe that every single child throughout America should learn reading, writing, and arithmetic at the highest level possible.

House Democrats believe that every single child should be exposed to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics so that they have the skills to succeed in the 21st century economy.

House Democrats believe that the parents of this great country should have the opportunity to be involved intimately and engaged intimately in the education of their children.

We take a back seat to no one on this issue. In fact, we put resources into making sure that the opportunity to be fully involved and engaged in the education of their children.

The other side of the aisle—the extreme MAGA Republicans—have, in fact, voted against legislative efforts to empower parents in our schools.

It is a deeply personal issue for all of us. I am the father of two sons who were in public school every step of the way—kindergarten, elementary school, middle school, high school—and parental involvement and parental engagement is critically important. It was for their journey, for their success, and we want that for every single parent in America.

What we don't want is the extreme MAGA Republicans trying to tell the parents of America how to educate their children, how to raise their children, what books their children can or cannot be exposed to on their educational journey. That's what this legislation does on parents' bill of rights.

Their educational agenda is pretty simple. They want to ban books. They want to bully the LGBTQ+ community. They want to bring guns into classrooms, kindergarten and above. That is their educational agenda. They want to ban books about history, ban books about the American journey, ban books about the Asian-American experience, ban books about slavery, ban books about the civil rights movement, ban books about the LGBTQ+ experience, ban books about the Native American experience, ban books about the Latino experience, ban books about the American experience, ban books about our collective journey as a great country, a gorgeous mosaic of people from all over the world who come here to pursue the American Dream.

That is what makes American exceptionalism so phenomenally important to our collective success as a country, and they want to take that away from the parents of America.

Because of what has happened in several States, they have already banned more than 2,500 books in America, the highest number in recorded history.

What kind of books have they banned? Are these books dangerous to the education of our children? They are too numerous for me to go through during the time that we have allotted for this debate, but let's go through a few of them.

They want to ban a book called "Maus." It is about the horrors of the Holocaust, an egregious crime against humanity that we should never ever forget. I'm not sure how they could.

They want to ban "Maus," a book about the Holocaust. What is so offensive in that book? Let me read a passage. "They took from us our papers, our clothes, and our hair. We were cold, and we were afraid."

Extreme MAGA Republicans don't want the children of America to learn about the Holocaust.

What else do they want to ban? They want to ban a book called "I am Martin Luther King, Jr." There is a Federal holiday in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr., what he meant to the country, the civil rights movement, the march toward a more perfect Union, liberty and justice for all, equal protection under the law, and free and fair elections.

They want to ban the book "I am Martin Luther King, Jr." What is so offensive about this book? Let me read a passage. "In my mind, I was told to me I wasn't as good as they were, just because of the color of my skin. When someone hurts you like that, it can be tempting to hurt them back. You must refuse. When someone shows you hate, show them love. When someone shows you violence, show them kindness."

That is the book that they want to ban. "I am Martin Luther King, Jr." Why else do they want to ban? They want to ban the book called "Melissa," a book describing, in very personal terms, the experience of a trans girl beginning to understand her identity.
What is so dangerous about that? I was taught in my religion, growing up in the Cornerstone Baptist Church, that we are all God’s children. Shouldn’t we learn about all of God’s children? That is what my religion teaches me. What is so offensive about “Melissa”? What is so offensive about this book?

Let me read a passage. “Her heart sank. She had genuinely started to believe that if people could see her onstage as Charlotte, maybe they would see that she was a girl offstage, too.”

Extreme MAGA Republicans don’t want your child to learn about the LGBTQ+ experience in America. That is a decision that extreme MAGA Republicans here in Congress should make. The parents of America should be able to make that determination.

What else do the extreme MAGA Republicans want to ban? Now, I grew up in America, where we were taught that whenever you were trying to identify something, it was a great country. Well, there is nothing more American than baseball and apple pie. I am sure if we searched hard enough, they want to ban something about apple pie, but today, we know they definitively have tried to ban a book about baseball, about Roberto Clemente, the first Latino baseball player to make it into the Hall of Fame.

Why do they want to ban a book about Roberto Clemente? What are they trying to hide from you? Let me read a passage from this book. “He had no money for a baseball bat, so he made one from a guava tree branch. His first glove he also made, from the cloth of a coffee bean sack. His first baseball field was muddy and crowded with palm trees.”

Isn’t that part of what makes America such a great country, that you can aspire to be part of what you see in front of you? In this case, it was baseball for a young kid growing up in Puerto Rico—part of America—who decides that he wants to be part of this great American pastime.

The extreme MAGA Republicans want to stop your children from learning about the Latino experience in America, even when it relates to baseball and Roberto Clemente.

One last example—I could be up here all day. What else do they want to ban? They want to ban a book called “The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian,” which is about a Native teenager’s high school experience.

What is more American than Native Americans? They don’t want your children to learn about Native American history and experience in this country.

What is so dangerous about this particular book? Let’s see. It says: “We Indians have lost everything. We lost our Native land; we lost our languages; we lost our songs and dances. We lost each other. We only know how to lose and be lost.”

That is part of the Native American experience in this country. That is part of reality. That is part of our journey.

Extreme MAGA Republicans don’t want the parents of this country to have the opportunity to decide for themselves whether the children of America should have an opportunity to learn about the Native American experience. They want to put their MAGA Republican ideology down the throats of the children and parents in America.

That is unacceptable; that is unconscionable; and that is un-American. Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, which is about a Native teenager, strongly oppose this legislation.

We will fight against this legislation. We will fight against the banning of books and fight against the bullying of children from any community and certainly from the LGBTQ+ community.

We are going to fight against your extreme MAGA Republican agenda that has no interest in dealing with the education of our children, empowering them, and offer up solutions like bringing guns into the classroom.

We will fight against their efforts at banning books, bullying children, and taking away the freedom of parents to make decisions on their own today. We will fight against our children. We will fight against it forever and always stand with the parents and children of our great country.

Vote “no” against H.R. 5.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, here is the truth about this bill. This bill will not ban any books. I repeat: This bill will not ban any books.

What is dangerous right now is when people misrepresent what is in legislation before us.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. OWENS), my distinguished colleague, the chair of the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development.

Mr. Chairman. I rise in support of H.R. 5, the Parents Bill of Rights Act.

I am the father of 6 children and the grandfather of 16 grandchildren. I am also the son of a man who lived through the throats of the children and parents in America.

Under the one-party Democratic rule in Washington, parents have been left behind, kept out of the classroom, and even labeled and targeted as domestic terrorists by the Biden DOJ. In Biden’s America, parents come last.

Under the House Republican majority, we are supporting parents and fulfilling our commitment to America by making sure moms and dads have a seat at the table.

The Parents Bill of Rights Act is just good, old-fashioned common sense, and here is the truth of the Parents Bill of Rights Act. Parents have a right to know what is being taught in schools and to see the reading materials. Parents have a right to be heard. Parents have a right to see the school budget and spending. Parents have a right to protect their child’s privacy. Parents have a right to be updated on any violent activity at school.

Unfortunately, in committee, 17 Democrats opposed protecting these Gods given parental rights. Parental rights are non-negotiable. Mr. Chair, I am proud to vote “yes” on the Parents Bill of Rights Act, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE). Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. Chairman, I want to adhere to the protocol of the floor. If I did not, I would shout from the gallery’s front row, I represent a happy grandmother that I champion parental rights and parents. I am happy to have been one and to continue to be one, and I view parenthood and parents’ rights as cherished rights.

Why the Democrat here would argue against that principle. In fact, there is no doubt that we, as Democrats, have fought for parents and their rights.

Child tax credits should now be made permanent, taking care of additional childcare for those parents who are burdened, and for those who need housing, investing more so that children have roofs over their heads, as well as ensuring that no one is left alone looking for housing.

Why I cannot support H.R. 5 is not because of my championing parents’ rights. Before I came here from Houston, I was with parents, fighting against the devastating takeover by a Republican Governor and State education commissioner of a school district that has a rating of B.

I am against undermining nutrition in schools. That is in this bill. I am against undermining vulnerable children, such as transgender children. I am against banning books, such as a book about a Black astrologist, a scientist, Neil deGrasse Tyson, or the story of a man ultimately of peace who brought South Africa together, Nelson Mandela.

Banned books, I am against that. I am against it because I want to make sure that parents want to have involvement in what their children learn.

I am against not wanting to hear the words of Elie Wiesel about the Holocaust. He said: “I swore never to be silent whenever wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation.”

Don’t we want our children to be kind?

Don’t we want our children to know that slavery was wrong, as I fight against slavery today that still exists?

Don’t we want our children to understand the basis of all of our history, the mosaic of this Nation and African-American history?

Don’t we want teachers to get the salaries that they deserve?
Don’t we want to make sure that it is important, if you will, to ensure that our school buildings are repaired? That is why I include in the Record the First Focus letter.


Hon. JULIA LETLOW, Member, Committee on Education & the Workforce, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. KEVIN McCARTHY, Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. HAKEEM JEFFRIES, Democratic Leader, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. BOBBY SCOTT, Ranking Member, Committee on Education & the Workforce, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR PRESIDENT BIDEN and Secretary CARDONA, Public school education across the country is under attack and the actions of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in taking over one of the largest school districts in the nation and mandating policies that are both harmful and harmful to schools and a student population of approximately 274,000 students. In recent years, there have been continuing intermeddling and overstepping by some state agencies (TEA included) that are subject to federal law and oversight. Seizing a district that is a recipient of major federal funding.

State officials in Texas are active working to eliminate public education and erode federal protections in educational institutions throughout the State of Texas, causing financial harm and humiliation to see for many school systems, particularly to our children and families in Black and Hispanic communities in Texas. There are concerns, some raised by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the state of Texas, that the state of Texas has an absolute outrage and a threat to all Texans. There is no justifiable reason for the TEA to take over HISD. Rather, the continued meddling and overstepping into our educational systems by Texas state officials is causing further harm and damage to our communities and it must stop.

Taking over a school district such as HISD makes absolutely no sense at all. HISD is the largest school district in Texas, with 24% of Houston public schools and approximately 200,000 students. HISD is rated B+, and 94 percent of HISD schools now earn a grade of A, B or C, up from 82 percent in 2019. Out of those 400 schools that take over HISD on one school. As of today, Phyllis Wheatley High School is now a longer low-performing and there are new members on the board. The conditions that existed when the takeover was first proposed no longer exist. Moreover, Wheatley would’ve passed under the TEA’s rules. The TEA changed the rules, and made them fail. Given Wheatley’s improvement to a C and the district’s overall B rating, the TEA’s reasoning for initiating a takeover bid in 2019 is no longer valid.

TEA has no experience managing a district on the scale of magnitude and also is incapable of managing in such drastic efforts without any viable justification. The structure that will be used to govern this huge school district will be a lack of input for any role by the TEA—with no input by voters, teachers, students and/or administrators. There is a question of whether the TEA is operating the HISD under Texas State law and the Texas State Education Code. Pursuant to Senate bill 1365, Section 39.054 (c) and Texas State Education Code. Section 39.054(c)(1) and (2) it is unclear that the TEA commissioner even has the authority to take over HISD because the school in question, Wheatley High School, has maintained a C performance rating. The action of confusion is to the constituents of HISD, and the state has no answer as to why they think they have the right to do this—particularly given that Wheatley High School is performing, the other schools are performing, and the school district is performing, even though there are schools with challenges that the school is facing.

While the TEA Commissioner’s stated reasoning for pursuing a state takeover of HISD, namely single underperforming school, is not the full story, this rationalization further highlights the latest confusing and contradictory actions taken by Texas state officials in their larger efforts to justify their selection of a school district, without the TEA's right to be under Texas State Education Code. Section 39.054(c)(1) and (2) it is unclear that the TEA commissioner even has the authority to take over HISD because the school in question, Wheatley High School, has maintained a C performance rating. The action of confusion is to the constituents of HISD, and the state has no answer as to why they think they have the right to do this—particularly given that Wheatley High School is performing, the other schools are performing, and the school district is performing, even though there are schools with challenges that the school is facing.

A state takeover would not only lead to school closures, layoffs and no improvements in test scores, it would also absolutely harm the HISD scholars. All you have to do is look at any other city in the state like Galveston and any other city like Phyllis Wheatley High School. The TEA has no experience managing a district on the scale of magnitude and also is incapable of managing in such drastic efforts without any viable justification. The structure that will be used to govern this huge school district will be a lack of input for any role by the TEA—with no input by voters, teachers, students and/or administrators. There is a question of whether the TEA is operating the HISD under Texas State law and the Texas State Education Code. Pursuant to Senate bill 1365, Section 39.054 (c) and Texas State Education Code. Section 39.054(c)(1) and (2) it is unclear that the TEA commissioner even has the authority to take over HISD because the school in question, Wheatley High School, has maintained a C performance rating. The action of confusion is to the constituents of HISD, and the state has no answer as to why they think they have the right to do this—particularly given that Wheatley High School is performing, the other schools are performing, and the school district is performing.
American history. Another seven of the districts taught mostly Hispanic student bodies. Only one district—Shepherd ISD—was predominantly White. Around 66 percent of students in one district are economically disadvantaged.

Of HISD’s 187,000 students, 62 percent are Hispanic and 22 percent are Black. Nearly 40 percent of its students are economically disadvantaged.

None of the districts previously taken over by TEA are located in or near HISD. The smallest of those districts, Kendleton ISD, had less than 100 students and the largest, El Paso ISD, has 50,709. Beauvoir ISD, which had 17,000.

While there are real schools struggling throughout Texas and despite an overall increase in public school performances, TEA is choosing to target primarily those schools where predominantly Black and Hispanic children over other school districts with far greater rates of performance decline. In fact, TEA released a report for its 2022 A-F accountability ratings for districts and campuses, which showed that of the 1,195 districts and 8,451 campuses rated in 2022, 25% of districts and 31% of campuses rated their latter grade from 2019, and 18% of high-poverty campuses in Texas were rated an A.

It is important to highlight that Texas is behind the national average in how much it spends per student in the classroom. More specifically, data from the U.S. Census Bureau has shown that Texas spends less than the national average. Overall, Texas spent a little over $10,000 per student in 2020; as the largest district in the state, HISD spent even less, averaging $9,380 per student. Given the complete lack of funding infused into school districts like HISD, it should be incumbent upon the State of Texas to redirect its focus to distributing more appropriate and equitable funding across shamefully underfunded and underserved communities and school districts.

In fact, it is well known that a critical factor impacting students’ academic outcomes is investing even more money into low-income students. Low-income students perform worse in states with larger spending gaps—states whose actual spending is further from the amount needed. With data ranging back to the late 1980s, researchers found that school takeovers demonstrate a direct correlation to academic improvements. And in states with no spending gaps, poor students perform at or above the national average for all U.S. states, which shows that additional spending can improve the academic performance of even our poorest students by investing more—not by discriminatorily targeting schools for state takeovers.

As your agency is aware, Texas is plagued with 154 open and pending cases of reported discrimination currently under investigation at elementary, secondary, and post-secondary schools throughout the state. Between 2015 and 2023, there have been at least 51 cases opened, and 23 cases are currently pending investigation for racial discrimination and harassment, as well as at least 28 cases for retaliatory discrimination at various educational institutions across Texas. And yet, these numbers do not even begin to account for the countless documented and undocumented cases of current and historic discriminatory practices and policies, the scale of which no state in this nation is immune to.

The Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights serves to enforce several federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance from the Department of Education. Whereby, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability; and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 prohibits age discrimination. The primary role of OCR is to assure student populations facing these areas of discrimination, and to resolve their complaints, as well as to protect the rights of students and parents to participate in and benefit from the educational programs, services, and activities of their school districts and institutions promoting systemic solutions to civil rights problems.

These civil rights laws enforced by OCR extend to all students, educational agencies, elementary and secondary school systems, colleges and universities, vocational schools, proprietary schools, and individuals. OCR investigates complaints of racial harassment, discrimination, and negative impact on HISD and other Independent School Districts. This is particularly relevant to ensuring that the rights of Texans have questions or need additional information, please contact Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee at (202) 225–3816, the Representative for the 18th Congressional District of Texas, the jurisdiction where HISD is located.

Mr. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chair, I want us to know that, in supporting parents’ rights, we must support not destroying public school education, and we must support the Houston Independent School District to not have the TEA takeover.
Mr. Chair, this bill puts parents in control. Everyone who cares about the welfare of our youngest citizens should support this bill.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 ½ minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAWLER), the ranking member of the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, we oppose H.R. 5 because we stand with the teachers, the students, and 13,000 school superintendents, whose letter opposing this legislation I would ask to be included in the RECORD.

Mr. Chair, I include in the RECORD a letter from The School Superintendents Association.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chair, I support this bill.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chair, I appreciate this gentleman.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Chair, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman.

Mr. Chair, we can do better for the children of America.

Mr. Chair, we need more politicians reading books and fewer politicians trying to censor books in America. It is amazing to me to see politicians who oppose a universal violent crime bill funding a massive new unfunded mandate for our local governments. Why don’t you take the time to make a phone call?

That is what I did. I called up the person who runs the school libraries for Montgomery County, Maryland, which has more than a million people there. I learned from Andrea Christman, who oversees all the media centers for our county, that the entire catalogue of 2.2 million books is online, freely available, and current as of today. Anybody can go online and find it right now.

Well, before you pass a massive new Federal law and a massive new unfunded mandate for our local governments, why don’t you take the time to make a phone call?

Is there really a problem for parents like us with finding out what is in our public school libraries?

Mr. Chair, 2 years ago, more than 1,600 books were banned in the United States of America.

Here are three of the key books that the rightwingers have been going after.

Khaled Hosseini’s “The Kite Runner” about the Taliban, authoritarianism, and abuse of the Taliban, a rightwing religious fundamentalist movement all about censorship and repression of women’s control over their own bodies and their own fertility.

“The Handmaid’s Tale,” Margaret Atwood’s extraordinary dystopian novel about a rightwing misogynist movement which uses high technology and depraved religious ideology to control not only the minds, but the private and public lives and the fertility of women.

Of course, George Orwell’s, “1984,” because they have no sense of irony. They are always trying to censor this one.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chair, I yield the gentleman from Maryland an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Chair, we need more politicians reading books and fewer politicians trying to censor books in America.

Mr. Chair, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Chair, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman.

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Is there really a problem for parents like us with finding out what is in our public school libraries?
Act, and I believe this bill gives much-needed certainty to parents that their child’s education will have transparency in their child’s education.

Simply put, this bill guarantees all parents a voice in the decisions that affect their children and a seat at the table. It makes clear that you do not relinquish your rights as a parent simply by sending your child to a public school.

Now, among the bill’s main components, parents have the right to know what their children are being taught. Parents have the right to be heard. Parents have a right to see the school budget and spending. Parents have a right to protect their child’s privacy. Parents have a right to keep their children safe.

Some say this is already the case, and that this is just codifying. Well, if that is the case, then great. We are codifying into law the ability and the rights of parents.

Now, these are important safeguards that not only ensure parents’ rights, but also respect State and local control of our schools. It does not get into what is taught in schools, what books or materials are used, or how a school should address an issue. Those decisions are still left to the State and local school districts.

In addition, when it comes to their child’s health and well-being, parents have a right to know if a school employee acts to treat, advise, or address issues of self-harm, possession or use of drugs, an eating disorder, or if a child brings a gun to school.

Now, there are also protections included in this bill that require parents to be informed if their school takes action to change their child’s gender markers, pronouns, preferred name, or make sex-based accommodations for locker rooms or bathrooms.

Mr. Chair, I recently met with constituents from the LGBTQ+ community in my district, including trans youth and parents. They raised several concerns about this language, concerns primarily with respect to student safety and well-being of these youth, especially trans youth.

So Dr. Foxx, I am hoping that you can clarify some of this for me and for the Record.

Does the bill require teachers or school officials to disclose the sexual orientation of a student or statements made by the student about his or her gender identity?

Second, will students still have the ability to speak with teachers, advisors, or school officials without fear that those conversations will be subject to disclosure? It is important that respect State and local control of our schools.

And finally, will States and local school districts still be able to come up with their own policies and best practices for informing parents about these issues so as to ensure the well-being and safety of our children?

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentleman from New York for his questions.

Mr. Chair, I can confirm that the bill does not require a teacher to disclose any of the information that the gentleman described.

The bill does not address a student’s identity or statements but is solely focused on notifying parents about actions taken by school personnel to act on a gender transition, such as changing pronouns or switching locker rooms.

I would add, despite the claims from my friends on the other side of the aisle, even The New York Times acknowledged that this is not a partisan issue, writing in January that, “Parents of all political persuasions have found themselves unsettled by what schools know and don’t reveal.”

Our bill enshrines commonsense transparency for parents of children to reflect these concerns but it does not force any teacher to reveal private conversations or any information about sexual orientation.

The legislation is also clear that education is largely the responsibility of the States and any State or local school district would work with the Department to ensure their compliance with these provisions without violating student privacy. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. LAWER. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentlewoman for her clarification.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 30 seconds.

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Ms. FOXX. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentleman from New York for his questions.
Further, elements of these bills will significantly exacerbate the current youth mental health crisis, particularly for LGBTQ+ and other marginalized youth.

PARENTS BILL OF RIGHTS (H.R. 5)

Title I—Amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

Sec 101 and Sec 103. State and Local Educational Agency Plan Assurances

NASP supports efforts to increase transparency to inform parents about school curricula. Existing provisions in FERPA and PPRA clearly articulate the rights of parents to review school curricula and make requests to have specific lessons or survey administration. It is critical that parents and families know what is happening in their child’s classroom so that they may engage with their children about what they are learning, and even offer differing viewpoints and helping their children think critically. Requirements to make this information publicly available to all creates an unnecessary burden on the SEA and LEA which is unattainable and will further impede already strained local and state educational systems. We hope that Sec 101 and Sec 103 are redundant, we offer the following edits to ensure that all information is accessible to all families: families and others with disabilities and those who speak a language other than English:

Sec 101 State Plan Assurances

(O)(1) “posts on a publicly accessible website of the agency, in a manner that is accessible to persons with disabilities and those who speak a language other than English, such curriculum;

(O)(1)(II) if such agency does not operate a website, widely disseminates to the public, in a manner that is accessible to persons with disabilities and those who speak a language other than English such curriculum;

(O)(ii)(II) “If such agency does not operate a website, widely disseminates to the public, in a manner that is accessible to persons with disabilities and those who speak a language other than English such curriculum;

(9) “post on a publicly accessible website of the local educational agency or, if the local educational agency does not operate a website, widely disseminates to the public, in a manner that is accessible to persons with disabilities and those who speak a language other than English, the plan. …

We offer the following suggested revision as to the definition of ‘curriculum.’ Teachers routinely alter lesson plans or planned pace of curriculum based on students’ progress and needs. Teachers must maintain the ability to differentiate instruction and to develop lesson plans, aligned with state academic standards, that meet the needs of their students. Many students thrive on individualized instruction, and their success is enhanced when they are exposed to modified, or specially designed instruction (as part of a child’s Individualized Education Program) to ensure access to the general curriculum for all students. We strongly caution against considering these instructional materials ‘curriculum’ as it could inadvertently violate the privacy rights of specific groups, especially in smaller communities where identification is easier.

Sec 104 Parent’s Right to Know

We support that parents should have the right to see what materials are available in the school, to be well informed about potential health or behavioral risks, and to seek out the removal of information or resources without their permission. As such, we request the following revision:

"(b) DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION.—An educational agency or institution or authorized representative of such agency or institution shall:

(A) inform parents prior to their participation in a survey if:

(A)(i) the student consents to the disclosure to such parent any response of the student to a survey if

(B) the student consents to the disclosure of such information;

(B) the student consents to the disclosure of such information.

(3) inform students, prior to their participation in a survey in which identifying information is collected, that their individual responses may be disclosed to a parent upon request.”

Current law requires the reflection for parental consent prior to student participation in specific school surveys, rendering Sec 202(c)(2)(D)(i) redundant, and when considered in conjunction with the proposed definition of ‘Medical Examination or Screening’, highly concerning.

"(n) DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION.—

(A) in the case of any revisions to the current legal definition of measurement, ‘Medical Examination or Screening’, which explicitly includes a mental health or substance use disorder screening, combined with parental consent requirements, may undeniably exacerbate the youth mental health crisis and undermine efforts to improve school safety. The term ‘mental health screening’ could be interpreted in a manner that results in significant harm to school communities. A mental health screening is not synonymous with a standardized measure or survey intended to gather personal information about an individual for diagnostic use. While those tools might be utilized as part of a holistic approach to identifying and addressing student need, mental health screening is a process by which educators, in collaboration with school psychologists, counselors, and mental health professionals, and families, identify students who may need support. School mental health professionals will not engage in a therapecurative function without active parental consent. However, students must be allowed to seek out a trusted adult or mental health professional, including school psychologists, at school and these professionals must be able to assess student well-being and (as part of their responsibility as a mandatory reporter) immediately assess if there is concern regarding risk to self or others. As currently written, H.R. 5 would require parental consent prior to any contact with a school mental health professional and could result in unnecessary and preventable harm to self or others. Parents are already notified of reported risk after an assessment is completed and inability to reach a parent for consent to do an assessment can have lethal consequences.

We offer the following suggested revision and provide the opportunity to collaborate on statutory language that ensures availability of comprehensive school mental and behavioral health services and balances schools obligation to support student learning and well-being and maintain a safe school environment with efforts to improve family engagement in all aspects of the educational environment.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION OR SCREENING.—The term ‘medical examination or
screening’ means any medical examination or screening that involves the exposure of private body parts, or any act during such examination or screening that includes insertion, injection, or other medical intervention into the body, or a mental health or substance use disorder screening, except that such term does not include:

(i) a hearing, vision, or scoliosis screening;
(ii) an observational screening carried out to comply with child find obligations under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1401 et seq.);
(iii) Informal observation screening, or short term consultation, of non-therapeutic nature, with a school based mental health services provider;
(iv) a process to assess and mitigate the risk of inflicted harm to self or others, provided that parental notification of such screening occurs as soon as is feasibly possible unless there is reasonable evidence that parent notification will result in harm to the child.

**PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SPORTS**

ACT OF 2023 (H.R. 734)

NASP believes, and courts have established, that the civil rights of transgender students are protected as part of U.S. public schools while they are under the “custody” of the Education Amendments of 1972. These rights include honoring a person’s right to express gender identity, and the right to modify gender expression when necessary for individual well-being, and to have their gender identity affirmed and acknowledged, the right to explore and question their gender identity, and the right to participate in activities, including sports, that correspond with one’s gender identity.

We vehemently oppose any effort, including the Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act, to define sex based solely on a person’s reproductive biology and genetics at birth, on its face, is narrowly focused on the issue of athletics, it is legally tenuous to assume that Title IX allows for multiple, context specific, definitions of sex. This definition would most certainly be applied across all educational activities and programs and amounts to an assault on the existence and civil rights of transgender, nonconforming, and intersex children, adolescents, and adults in our communities. Further, H.R. 734 places unfair burden on school administrators, who are not doctors, to examine and police a student’s body. Administrators and the National Association of Secondary School Principals have expressed concern and frustration over individual state’s laws which violate Title IX.

This legislation is a “solution” in search of a problem. The policies of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), among others have longstanding guidelines regarding participation on competitive sports. The IOC first allowed transgender participation in the Olympic Games beginning in 2004 and the NCAA has done so since 2011. Both the IOC and the NCAA have refined their policy to better align with scientific fact and empirical research; and both organizations, as well as numerous high school athletic associations and professional and amateur sports leagues, currently to allow transgender athletes to compete on teams and in events aligned with their gender identity. Inclusive sports participation and opportunities to compete in professional sports are often seen by no one as harmful to cisgender athletes, or women’s athletics in general, are harmed by these policies.

For almost two decades, transgender athletes in the United States have been allowed to participate in some of the most elite national and international competitions as their birth sex. Yet, it was not until 2020, out of concern for the future of women’s athletics, that policy makers sought to prohibit transgender people, particularly transgender women, from participating in sports teams that aligned with their gender identity. This legislation is not about protecting women. This legislation is a thinly veiled attack on women by codifying a harmful and discriminatory definition of ‘sex’ under the guise of “protecting women” from discriminations in sports. This legislation is not about sports, it is about further erasing transgender people from public life. We adamantly oppose this legislation and urge you to do the same. We welcome the opportunity to collaborate on legislation that promotes effective family engagement, ensures access to a well-rounded and inclusive curriculum, supports student well-being, and affirms the rights and identities of all students. Please contact NASP Director of Policy and Advocacy, Dr. Kelly Van Campen, on this matter.

Sincerely,

KATHLEEN MINKE, PhD, NCSP, Executive Director.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ALLEN):

Mr. Chair, there is no question that over the past years, we have seen parents being denied the right to make decisions about their children’s education. I don’t quite understand the argument from the other side.

The reason I stand before this body today is not because I happen to be in Washington; it is because I am representing parents in my district who want to know what their children are being taught and what they are required to read.

In fact, parents across this country, certain groups, have gone so far as to label the parents “domestic terrorists” just because they wanted a say in their children’s education. That is what we are talking about today is giving control back to the parents of our children.

This is not the way our education system was created, and it is not the way it is supposed to work. Allowing families to have a say in their children’s education should not be a controversial subject. I don’t get it.

Parents have a right to know what is being taught to their children, to give consent for things that happen and to be heard. My goodness, it is in the top 10: Honor thy father and thy mother.

Unfortunately, we have seen Washington Democrats and outside groups push to radically reshape our education system by creating silos in schools, by breaking down the curriculum into our schools and classrooms regardless of whether families approve.

House Republicans are working to fulfill our commitment to America by building a future that is built on freedom, for curing out loud, a future where parents’ rights are protected and families are given a seat at the table. I am calling on all my colleagues to join us in support of H.R. 5, the Parents Bill of Rights Act.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire how much time remains on each side?

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Virginia, I yield 2 1/2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ).

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 5, which we should really call the police over parents act.

As a mom of three, let me be clear about what this legislation would do. It opens the door to gagging educators, parents, and students, and turns classrooms into archaic tools for a vocal extremist minority.

Worse, it undermines what any mother wants for her child, a supportive classroom space that provides a fact-based education and practical life skills and critical-thinking skills.

Just look at the colossal education nightmare unfolding in my home State of Florida. Governor DeSantis and his stooge Florida lawmakers propose prohibiting girls from discussing their menstrual periods with one another while in school. They are already banning books, and they are banning certain elements of African-American history from being taught in school.

Governor DeSantis and his radical allies are also waging a cruel campaign to marginalize Florida’s LGBTQ+ community, and suppress the histories of others they deem unworthy.

The Republican revival of the Lavender Scare includes shutting down businesses and passing a “Don’t Say Gay” law that bans classroom discussions of sexual orientation and gender identity, even in high school. Like a cancer, this hateful law has spread with Republicans now censoring educators on a wide variety of topics, so it is no surprise my colleagues across the aisle want to export these same dangerous policies across America.

Make no mistake, H.R. 5 undermines teachers, and instead of offering students more support, it effectively degrades. The result of this law in Florida has cleared bookshelves and canceled coursework and an AP exam on African-American history.

As a mother whose children attended public schools, I speak for millions of moms when I say all we want for our children is a safe learning environment that ensures they discover the wider world, and not force them to grow into narrow-minded, ignorant adults.

This legislation just hands a vocal and extreme minority of parents the power to dictate what every American child learns.

To all my business-friendly Republicans, every classroom move to censor
and ban leaves our children even less competitive on the global stage. Mark my words.

Take it from this mom: We should reject this misguided legislation and, instead, unite to build classrooms where every child gets the resources and support they need to succeed in the 21st century.

Mr. Chairman, I include in the RECORD a letter from the First Focus Campaign for Children.

March 20, 2023.

Hon. Julia Letlow, Member, Committee on Education & the Workforce, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. Kevin McCarthy, Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. Hakeem Jeffries, Member, Committee on Education & the Workforce, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. Virginia Foxx, Chair, Committee on Education & the Workforce, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. Bobby Scott, Ranking Member, Committee on Education & the Workforce, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Dear Congresswoman Letlow, Speaker McCarthy, Leader Jeffries, Chairwoman Foxx, and Members Scott:

I am writing on behalf of First Focus Campaign for Children, a bipartisan children’s advocacy organization dedicated to making children’s issues and families a priority in federal budget and policy decisions, to express opposition to H.R. 5, the Parents Bill of Rights Act. We do not believe this bill strikes the right balance of responsibilities of parents, and the often-ignored but important rights of children.

PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IS CRITICAL

First, let’s be clear: Parents are fundamental to the upbringing of children and absolutely should be engaged and involved in the education of their children. In fact, children have better outcomes when their parents are involved. Consequently, I have immense respect for the work, talent, dedication, and concern that the vast majority of teachers and educators bring to their profession on a daily basis—all with the goal of educating our nation’s children to best achieve their hopes and dreams while also trying to provide a place of safety and compassion for each and every one of their students.

Again, we strongly support parental engagement in education, but parents should not control every aspect of children’s lives and educational decisions. Doing so is unworkable.

For example, imagine an elementary school of 500 students where 12 parents oppose a school policy involving educational books. Unfortunately, the early is flat, 21 are Holocaust deniers, 14 oppose learning about slavery, 7 believe in racial segregation, 17 believe in the concept of schools without walls, 27 believe in corporal punishment, 12 want Harry Potter books to be banned, 25 want books on the history of Tuned Ignorance of Taxes 31, and believe parents should be allowed to override a physician’s decision that a child with a concussion should refrain from participating in sports for a while. If they have the flu, 4 believe that a child with a cancer might be contagious, 34 believe students should be “tracked” in all subject areas, 12 believe schools should not be taught how to spell the words “sinful tap”, “quarantine”, or “isolation” because they are too “scary of words”, 41 don’t like the line that sex is “a childhood experience”, 9 believe same-sex marriages are a “sinful tap”, and 4 demand same-sex classrooms, etc. Even though most parents oppose these demands by some parents and many of them are completely false, undermine the purpose of education, threaten the safety of children, or promote discrimination, H.R. 5 would seek to push their accommodation in some form.

A REAL PARENTS’ AGENDA FOR CHILDREN

We must all do better by our kids. By an overwhelming 77-11 percent margin, a May 2022 poll by Lake Research Partners found that policy involving the rights of children should always be governed by a most interest of the child’ standard.” By a 60-19 percent margin, the American people believe that privileges of parents should not be too much on public education. And when it comes in investing in children, 9-in-10 voters (90-7 percent) agreed with the statement that “investing in education will improve their lives, development, and outcomes.

When it comes to children’s policy overall, a nationwide survey by Global Strategy Group in 2021 found that voters have strong priorities in favor of “creating more effective childcare options for all families” (67-8 percent), “expanding family and medical leave” (64 percent), bringing back the Improved Child Tax Credit (76-13 percent), and “expanding universal preschool for all 3- and 4-year-olds” (73-16 percent). The support for this agenda stands in sharp contrast to the opposition that American voters express to an agenda that would call for “passing legislation banning transgender-focused health care options for young Americans” (41-47 percent), “banning books that some parents find to have questionable content” (32-57 percent), and “banning high school classes focused on African-American history” (21-68 percent).

CHILDREN HAVE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS TOO

Before diving into the details of H.R. 5, it is important to acknowledge that children need the support BY parents and government to be successful, and that they also sometimes need protection FROM parents and government.

The fact is that children have unique and fundamental human rights that should not be ignored or dismissed. These include the right to a safe and healthy environment, the right to health care, the right to be protected from abuse and violence at home and in schools, the right to be protected from gun violence and school shootings, the right to not be discriminated against because of their race, ethnicity, gender (including gender identity and sexual orientation), economic status, religiosity, and immigration status, or age.

As for parental rights and H.R. 5’s attempts to modify the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) and Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), it is important to highlight that PPRA was originally enacted nearly 50 years ago (in 1974), and has been amended several times, including in 1978, 1994, and 2002, in order to broaden access and consent requirements.

H.R. 5 ADDS NEW BUREAUCRACY TO SCHOOLS AND DETRACTS FROM THE TIME, ATTENTION, AND FUNDING DEDICATED TO STUDENTS

While the impetus for aspects of H.R. 5 are well-intentioned, our first concern is that the bill is duplicative of language already in federal law, policies in state law, and general practice by school districts all across the country. Mr. Chairman, unfortunately, this bill also potentially adds new bureaucracy and red tape to schools and school districts all across this for no apparent benefit.

Unfortunately, the proposed changes may potentially harm children. Any funding, time, and attention that is shifted away from students and their learning toward making our schools less welcoming and detriments to students. But H.R. 5 provides no funding to address the many newly imposed bureaucratic requirements upon schools.

For example, H.R. 5 proposes new reporting requirements for schools to include in their “local educational agency report card” a budget that is detailed “for each elementary school and secondary school served by the local educational agency.” Requiring detailed accounting of costs, some of which are shared across school campuses (e.g., school districts, school boards), also potentially adds new bureaucracy and red tape to schools and educational staff serving the local educational agency.

First Focus Campaign for Children supports tracking funding that is allocated for schools and educational programs, and thus, annually produce a report that analyzes the funding of more than 250 federal programs. We share the report with Congress to improve awareness and transparency of funding for children. However, we would urge Congress to focus as many of those dollars as possible on the children themselves and not on excessive collecting and reporting measures that consume much of the attention and focus of H.R. 5.

H.R. 5 PROMOTES BOOK BANS RATHER THAN ACCESS TO BOOKS AND READING

Another important concern is language from Section 101 and Section 202 that would require schools to ban books that students do not have access to at every school “a library of books and other reading materials available to the students of such school in the school library.” Again, compiling, cataloging, and sharing such information to all parents would come at great time and expense that is not paid for by H.R. 5. That money and time would come at the expense of librarians and other educators focused on the education of children. Parents already have the right to visit their child’s school and its library, to request such information, and to ask their own children what they are learning and attending school.

Rather than adding the burdens of more bureaucracy and red tape to schools and creating a chilling effect through increasing incidences of censorship and book bans, we should be working together to pass legislation to encourage students to read and learn through greater access to books, such as Reach Out and Read, First Book, Reading Is Fundamental, and other literacy programs.

An individual parent should not solely be able to block a new curriculum book or censorship for all of the children in a school or school district. This violates the parental rights of the vast majority of parents who do not want book bans.

Even more importantly, it violates the fundamental rights of children. As Justice

"Students in school as well as out of school are "persons" under our Constitution. They are possessed of fundamental rights which the State must respect, just as they themselves respect their obligations to the State ... In the absence of a specific showing of constitutionally valid reasons to regulate their speech, students are entitled to freedom of expression of their views."

Justice Fortas adds:

"It can hardly be argued that either students or teachers shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate.

In the Supreme Court case Island Trees School District v. Pico (1982), the Court held that children have a fundamental right to an education and access to learning that is not limited by the censorship of books based on "narrowly partisan or political" grounds. As Justice William Brennan writes:

""narrowly partisan or political" grounds. As

Our Constitution does not permit the official suppression of ideas. Thus, whether petitioners' removal of books from their school libraries denied respondents their First Amendment rights depends upon the motivation or intent behind petitioners' actions. If petitioners intended by their removal decision to deny respondents access to ideas with which petitioners disagreed, and if this intent was the decisive factor in petitioners' decisions, then petitioners have exercised their discretion in violation of the Constitution.

As a product of the public school system and father of two sons who graduated from public school, I understand the significant role our schools play in the education of our future leaders. However, far-left ideas have seeped into America's classrooms and have blurred the line between education and indoctrination. We cannot allow that to continue.

In the report accompanying H.R. 5, the House Education and Workforce Committee majority write, "Americans should never be forced to relinquish their parental rights to government—whether that involves curricular decisions or personal medical choices" (emphasis added). We strongly disagree.

First, such a statement would threaten the health, safety, and lives of some children in our community. For example, based on that statement, does the Committee majority reject the ability of schools to set graduation requirements? Oppose the teaching of evolution? Oppose the right to send children to school even if they are vomiting, have a fever, diarrhea, or have a communicable disease? Does the Committee majority now oppose school lunch mandates? School counseling protocols?

Mrs. CHAVEZ-DE Remer, Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mrs. Chavez-DeRemer).

Mrs. CHAVEZ-DE Remer. As a parent, I know moms and dads agree that we all want what is best for our children. That is one of the reasons why it is so difficult for us to let our sons and daughters come to school on their first day of kindergarten. We have to start placing an enormous amount of trust in our teachers and administrators to do what is best for our children.

At the end of the day, nobody will understand a child's interests and needs more than the people who love them most, their parents.

It is easy to understand why parents want to have and deserve to have the right to know what is going on inside the classroom. It is their responsibility. That is why we need the Parents Bill of Rights Act to help students succeed by ensuring every parent can have a voice in their child's education.

During the committee markup on this bill, I was honored to lead two proposals that are now included. One will help parents better understand the priorities of their children's school by bringing much-needed clarity to school budgets. The other sets both parents and teachers free from the burdens of summarily checking the curriculum feedback process.

My proposals build on two of the five core principles of the Parents Bill of Rights Act: Parents have the right to know what their children are being taught, and parents have the right to see the school's budget and spending.

I will always fight to protect parental involvement and to put parents first. I am proud to support the Parents Bill of Rights Act.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. Mcigarvey).

Mr. Mcigarvey. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to H.R. 5, a bill that promotes conflict over clarity, callousness over kindness, and politics over problem-solving.

I am speaking today, not just as a Member of Congress, but as the parent of three young children, two of whom attend public schools in Louisville, Kentucky, and one who will be soon.

Parents should be involved in their children's education, in everything from school board elections to the PTA, to communicating with their child's teacher on what is going on.

We received a message this morning from our kids' teacher letting us know that there would be no band because of a board decision. I was shocked. Why?

I am the mother of two young children who you saw stand with me in this very Chamber 2 weeks ago, and I have near-daily conversations with the parents in my district about their hopes and concerns. I can assure you, they view that at the table in the school board, and they are fed up with banning books, censoring our curriculum, or dictating what bathrooms students use.
Parents want increased resources for mental and behavioral health services, inclusive school environments that foster critical thinking and learning, and more funding to repair outdated and crumbling school buildings and address security concerns.

They want their children to learn a complete and accurate history of our country and our world, and they want the peace of mind that their children are safe.

Three days after my son stood with me on this floor and watched me take the oath of office, one of his classmates shot himself accidentally with an unsecured gun, and he died. It was a devastating loss for our community.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentle- 

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chair- 

Mr. MEUSER. Mr. Chairman, I appre- 

Mr. MEUSER. Mr. Chairman, I appre- 

As a father, I know that to a mom 

Parents should have the right to be heard and to know what their child is being taught. Parents should have the right to see the school budget. Parents should have the right to be alerted if there are instances of violence or problems in the child’s schools. Parents are not simply asking to be involved, they are simply asking to be involved, which helps create a strong family and a better educational environment for all.

It is our responsibility as elected officials to honor their requests and guarantees included in the education process and school activities. That is why this Republican majority has put forth the Parents Bill of Rights Act, and I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chair- 

I rise in support, strong support, Mr. Chair, of H.R. 5, the Parents Bill of Rights Act.

As parents, we put trust in our local schools and teachers and expect that our children are receiving an appropriate education, and in most cases, they do.

We have all had great teachers that have positively impacted our lives, and our children have, and we are very grateful for that and we will remember them forever.

In recent years, for varying reasons, there have been well-known instances where the trust between schools and parents has been eroded, in fact, broken. In those instances, those issues stem from parents being excluded or having their participation in the educational process removed, such as curriculum review being very limited.

Everyone agrees that such instances, whether they occur often or infrequently, should not happen, and when they do, they are unacceptable.

As a father, I know that to a mom and dad there is nothing more precious than their children, and being included in the education process should be a parent’s right, especially as taxpayers. Any rational adult, whether parent or educator, knows what the reasonable level of involvement should be.
I am a former teacher. My parents were teachers. I have been doing child education advocacy my entire career. My wife and I are parents of two public school children right now. This is our lives. This is what we do in and day out.

I want to be very clear so that my colleagues understand what rights I have as a parent, which are the same rights that all Americans, all parents in America, have if their children are in public schools or in private schools.

I can go speak to the school board whenever I want. I can do that now. I have that right.

Madam Chair, I can ask about the books. I can ask about the budget. Of course, I can get information about the medical condition of my children. I have that right now.

My colleagues have to know this. If they do not, and this is news to them, they can pull the bill.

Right now, this new national ban and set of controls will simply lead to our schools, our teachers, and many of our parents drowning in lawsuits.

One of my recommendations was a litigation shield to help protect our folks from obviously dangerous lawsuits that would come of this if this bill were to pass. The second was to opt out if a district does not want to be part of this because I believe in local control, as do most of the people in my district. Republicans, Democrats, and Independents believe in local control. Let school districts opt out.

It is not about local control. This is about taking a small, teeny ideology and creating a substitute amendment. We parents, leave us alone.

The Acting CHAIR (Ms. GREEN of Georgia). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Chair, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. LANDSMAN. Madam Chair, we need solutions at the State level and D.C. politicians with this bill to get out of our lives, get out of our doctors’ offices, get out of our classrooms, and, as a parent, get out of my house. Let me parent my child.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on H.R. 5.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. BONAMICI).

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Chair, today, the National Parents Union released a poll that supports an alternative version of H.R. 5 and does not support H.R. 5 in the language.

In fact, the majority of people believe that the bill of rights should guarantee that students should have access to a high-quality, well-rounded education with resources to support their individual needs. They overwhelmingly agree that parents’ own personal beliefs should not prevent other students from accessing certain curricula and materials.

The majority encourage the teaching of topics like women’s history, Black history, Native American history, and Latino, Latina, and Hispanic history.

The majority of parents want Congress to focus on issues like anti-bullying measures in schools and providing career and technical education and academic tutoring.

They rank requiring public schools to provide parents with a list of books and reading materials in the library as the least important priority, for Congress compared to other issues.

They say that public schools should teach about and discuss concepts like kindness, empathy, cooperation, and collaboration.

Ninety percent say that students should have access to high-quality, well-rounded education. Ninety percent say that students should be protected from any form of discrimination against them at school. Eighty-nine percent say that students should be taught using educational materials that are historically accurate. Eighty percent say students should be taught using educational materials that reflect the diversity of the United States.

Eighty percent say students should be taught about how government works so they can be prepared to participate in democracy.

My colleagues, H.R. 5 misses the mark. Please, vote it down. I will be offering an amendment. We have something we can stand for that will really, truly address the needs of students and parents.

Madam Chair, I invite in the RECORD a letter from the Council of the Great City Schools in opposition to H.R. 5.

COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS®,

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: The Council of the Great City Schools, the coalition of the nation’s largest central city school districts, writes to offer our perspective on H.R. 5, the Parents Bill of Rights Act pending before the Committee.

Urban school districts are committed to their students, their families, and long have worked to keep them informed, in- spired, and ready to partner with local schools. Authentic parent engagement is essential to increasing student achievement and readiness for college, career, and life.

The Council urges a NO vote on H.R. 5 and encourages Congress to develop legislation that will help our districts and school communities reach these goals.

Sincerely,
RAYMOND HART, Executive Director.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chair, it has been a pleasure to work on the Parent Rights Act. While working on this bill, I have heard from parents’ groups who offered their support. I would like to mention just a few of them.

The Concerned Women for America, the Independent Women’s Voice wrote: “The Parents Bill of Rights Act acknowledges parents’ fundamental right to make decisions for their children.”

“Parents do not simply turn children over to government schools with the assumption that the school will make every decision without parental input. As parents, we have a right to direct the upbringing, care, and education of our children.”

The Concerned Women for America Legislative Action Committee said: “Americans have been awakened to the troubling fact that public schools are failing our children. The lack of educational standards combined with the radical ideologies being taught in the classroom have led more and more parents to question the public education system. This act reasserts the proper role of parents in their children’s education.”

Finally, Parents Defending Education Action said: “There is an intentional and universal lack of transparency and accountability among school districts. Concerning incidents...
Parents Bill of Rights Act, introduced March 23, 2023, by Congresswoman JULIE LETLOW, addresses the primary issues parents have vocalized over the last 2 years: academics, free speech, safety, fairness, and transparency. We hope Congress will be receptive to the Parents Bill of Rights Act and vindicate parents who have spoken up and yearn for such legislation.

After hearing statements like this, it should be clear that this bill gives parents control over what their children are taught. According to survey results, 72 percent of Americans support curriculum transparency. Additionally, 67 percent believe that parents should be able to opt their children out of curriculum they believe is inappropriate or harmful. Nearly 8 in 10 parents polled nationally want to have some control over what their children are taught. watering down history or addressing race should not be a deregulatory requirement. One of the most dangerous provisions of this bill is the banning of books. Across our Nation, books that illustrate our rich history and our diversity are being pulled from library shelves. According to PEN American’s “Index of School Book Bans,” the 2,500 books banned last year, 41 percent of these books explicitly address LGBTQ themes, and 40 percent contain prominent characters of color.

My colleagues across the aisle say that nothing in this legislation will ban books or censor libraries. If this is true, I invite them to support my amendment, which ensures this legislation will not go into effect until the Comptroller General of the United States can confirm that the bill will not lead to censorship or banning books for children or affect learning outcomes for students.

Throughout history, the voices of women, persons of color, and members of the LGBTQ community have been suppressed. Their voices, experiences, and stories have been labeled controversial, offensive, and even un-American. As a teacher, you do not get to pick the parts of history you deem worthy to teach. When I was a teacher, I told the entire story honestly, the good and the bad, and gave students the tools that they needed to participate in their communities in a conscientious and productive way.

I will tell you a personal story. My son is currently reading "To Kill a Mockingbird," one of the books on this list of banned books. In his initial observation of this book, he said: “Mom, they use the n-word a lot.” I mean, a lot, and I don’t like it, but it opened the door to broader conversations between me and my son about segregation and Jim Crow laws, and it led him to ask some very difficult questions of me.

In his final observation of Harper Lee’s novel, he said: “But yet still, Atticus Finch defended Tom Robinson.” Through this complex story, his takeaway was not hateful, hurtful, or angry. It was that, even then, good people existed.

That is what books do. That is how kids learn, not through censorship. Teachers do not have the autonomy to indoctrinate students. Everything we are talking about here today is already published. Budgets are public. Curriculums are public. Parents are marching in, being a part of our classes.

When I was introduced by the ranking member, he mentioned that I was the National Teacher of the Year. That doesn’t happen without parent-teacher partnerships. This bill will not improve educational outcomes. This bill caters to a small group of individuals who seek to impose their worldviews on entire school districts, on my child.

Madam Chair, I strongly encourage my colleagues to oppose this bill, and I include in the RECORD the text of my amendment.

Mrs. Hayes of Connecticut moves to recommit the bill H.R. 5 to the Committee on Education and the Workforce and to report the same back to the House forthwith, with the following amendment:

**TITLE VII—EFFECTIVE DATE**

**SEC. 701. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

This Act, and the amendments made by this Act, shall not take effect until 1615 the Comptroller General of the United States—

(1) makes a determination that this Act will not—

(A) result in the banning or censorship of books for children attending public elementary and secondary schools or

(B) negatively affect learning outcomes for such children; and

(2) submits notice of such determination to Congress.

Ms. FOXX, Madam Chair, I yield myself 15 seconds.

Madam Chair, I am going to say again and again and again and again, this bill does not do anything to ban books.

My understanding is that the book “To Kill a Mockingbird” was banned by a liberal school board in California, so don’t blame us for what liberals do.

Madam Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. WILLIAMS).

Mr. WILLIAMS of New York. Madam Chair, let’s lay out the fundamental rights of parents. That is what we are discussing here today.

Number one, every parent should be given a choice and a voice on how their child receives an education.

Number two, school curriculum should not be used to politically indoctrinate our children.

Number three, parents deserve options. They deserve a choice on how their child receives an education.

In my family, my wife and I made a personal decision to homeschool our children. Every parent should be free to choose what is best for their child, not just the wealthy ones.

What is the parents bill of rights? What are the pillars of this bill? Parents deserve the right to know what is being taught in schools and to see the reading material. It is very simple.

Parents deserve to be heard. Parents deserve the right to see where the taxpayer dollars are going, how they are spent, and how they are being used. It is a fundamental principle of good governance.

Parents have the right to protect their children, to protect their children’s privacy.

Parents absolutely should be updated and informed in the instances of violence that seem to be increasing in our schools, many of which go unreported.

I am very honored to be a member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce and to support this bill, to support parents, and to support parents’ rights, particularly that our children get the best possible education. This is a significant step forward.
Sadly, they have had to get used to it. This dysfunctional district and its union have lurched from one strike, one shutdown to the next, and seized on COVID-19 as a golden opportunity to close schools indefinitely. Kids in LA were without in-person instruction longer than anywhere in the country, a year and a half for most students.

Even when some high schools resumed, students walked into a Kafta zoom in the room setup where there were a few students and a teacher. Sitting from a laptop sitting on a desk in the classroom. The eventual resumption of classes was anything but normal. You had kids who were forced to eat lunch on gymnasium floors or outside, even when it was raining. They would have to wear masks all day every day without any public health rationale. The district then imposed an illegal student vaccine mandate that the California courts had to intervene and strike down.

By the way, this was a failing school district even before COVID—on the brink of bankruptcy, with students testing several years behind grade level.

The hundreds of thousands of parents in this school district have been subject to one abuse after another. Their experience is shared by many parents across the country who have lost the right to control their child’s education at the hands of a corrupt education establishment driven less by student success than by special interests and social agendas.

Today’s Parents Bill of Rights Act is a desperately needed course correction, shifting the paradigm of public education in this country back toward one that is student-centered and parent-directed.

My addition to this legislation is the school choice amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Chair, I yield the gentleman from California an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. KILEY. The only parents in Los Angeles whose kids are not at home right now are those who have the resources for private school or the time and wherewithal to seek out a charter school or limited interdistrict transfer options.

My amendments will enable more parents to do the same, providing a clear path to find a school that better serves their child.

They will not only increase the educational outcomes of particular students but induce the sort of systemic change that we need to benefit all students.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chair, I include in the RECORD a list of groups that either oppose or express concerns about H.R. 5, over 225 different organizations.

LIST OF GROUPS THAT EITHER OPPOSE OR HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERNS ABOUT H.R. 5

AASA, The School Superintendents Association; AFT, American Federation of Teachers (AFT); American Library Association (ALA); Americans United for Science; AACTE (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education); Act To Change Advocacy Institute; Advocates for Youth; American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy; American Atheists; American Civil Liberties Union; American Humanist Association; American School Counselor Association; Aplia for Practical Superintendents Institute (AII); Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC); Athlete Ally; Autistic Self Advocacy Network; A Woman’s Choice of Charlotte; A Woman’s Choice of Jacksonville; A Woman’s Choice of Raleigh; Acadia Queer Collective; Aces NYC; Action Together New Jersey; African American Office of Gay Concerns; AIDS Foundation Chicago; Alliance for Quality Education; Arkansas Black Gay Men’s Forum; Avow Texas; Bazelion Center for Mental Health Law; Bond the Arc Jewish Action Campaign for Our Shared Future; Bans Off Miami; Black Californians United for Early Care and Education; Care in Action; Center for Civil Rights and Center for American Progress; Center for Applied Transgender Studies; Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP); Economic and Social Progress Award; Education Leaders of Color (EdLoC); Education Reform Now; Empowering Pacific Islander Communities; End Rape On Campus; Equal Rights Advocates; Equality California; Equal Justice; Equality Feminist Collective; First Focus Campaign for Children; FORGE, Inc.; First Focus Campaign for Children; Faces of Fallen Fathers; FL National Organization for Women; For the People of Gila Women’s Churches; Florida Health Justice Project; Forever Carsing Evonne; Girls Inc.; GLAAD; GLBTQ Pride Action Tank; Global Women’s Rights; Gender Justice; GLSEN New Mexico; Greater Milwaukee Urban League; Greater Orlando National Organization for Women; Hindu American Foundation (HAF); Hispanic Federation; Houston Area Urban League; Human Rights Campaign; Human Rights First; I Webb Howewow; Lawyering for Reproductive Freedom Fund; In Our Own Voice: National Black Women’s Reproductive Justice Agenda; Indivisible; Inter- ACT: Advocates for Intersex Youth; Inter-acial Asian Pacific Justice; National School Boards; Independent Voters of Illinois-Indpe pendent Precinct Organization; Indivisible

DuPage Indivisible Georgia Coalition; Indivisible Miami; Japanese American Citizens League; Juvenile Law Center; Jane’s Due Process; JASMYN, Inc.; KIPP Public Schools; Lafayette Citizens Against Sponsorship; Latino Memphis; Learning Rights Law Center; Los Angeles Immigration Coalition; Louisiana Citizens Against Censorship; Louisiana Coalition for Reproductive Freedom; Louisiana Progress; Louisiana Trans Advocates; Labor Council for Latin American; Lambda Legal; LatinoJustice PRLDEF; Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law; Lawyers for Good Government; League of Conservation Voters; Maryland Legal Aid; Matthew Shepard Foundation; MomsRising; Movement Advancement Project; Maine Parent Federation; Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition; Mazzoni Center; Memphis Urban League; Michigan Alliance for Special Education; Michigan Education Justice Coalition; Missouri Health Care for All; NARAL Pro- Choice America; National Association of School Psychologists (NASP); National Black Justice Coalition; National Center for Latin American Advocates; National Center for Lesbian Rights; National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment (National PLACE); National Center for Transgender Rights; National Council of Asian Pacific Americans; National Disability Rights Network (NDRN); National Domestic Workers Alliance; National Education Association (NEA); National Employment Law Project; National Hispanic Media Coalition; National LGBTQ Victory Fund; National Organization for Women; National Parents Union.

National Urban League; National Women’s Law Center; New America Action Fund; New Generation Equity Ongezoners; NASD; National Council of Jewish Women; ST Louis; NJ Community Schools Coalition; North Carolina Justice Center; OutFront Minnesota; OutNebraska; People For the American Way; PFLAG National; Physicians for Reproductive Health; Planned Parenthood Federation of America; Plume Health Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK); Public Citizen; Public Justice; Parent Education Organizing Council; Paterson Alliance; Paterson Education Foundation; PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education); Pride Action Tank; Pro Choice Missouri; Pro-Choice North Carolina; ProTest New England Blue; Reproductive Rights Coalition; Rad Family, a project of North Jersey Pride; Reproduc tive Freedom Acadia; Save Our Schools NJ; SHEEO Mississippi; Silver State Equal- ity-Nevada; Solid Foundation Youth Outreach; Southern Echo Inc.; St. Tammany Lib rary Alliance; School Board Partners; Sex ual Violence Prevention Project (SVPP); SIECUS; Sex Ed for Social Change; Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SAFEDF).

SPAN Parent Advocacy Network; SPLC Action Fund; Stand for Children; Schoolhouse Connection; Software & Information Industry Association (SIIA); Taher Health Justice Center; The Advocates for Human Rights; The Arc of the United States; The Council of the Great City Schools; The Education Trust; The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights; The Personal Stories Project; The Sikh Coalition; The Workers Circle; TransAthlete; True Colors United; United Methodist Women; University of Washington; VERA Center; The Ezekiel Project; The Parents’ Place of MD.

The Urban League of Philadelphia; The Womxn Project; Urban League of Greater Columbus; Urban League of Greater Tennessee; UnionsUS; Unitarian Universalist Association; United State of Women (USOW);
I hope our colleagues will not continue to misrepresent what is in this bill but will work with us for the benefit of America’s children. That is what we are about on our side of the aisle, not to hurt, not to be mean, but to support.

Madam Chair, I encourage my colleagues across the aisle to do what is best for students, support this important bill.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Madam Chair, when a mother or a father drops their child off at school in the morning, they should not have to wonder what that child will hear, read, see, or learn that day. Families should feel confident in the American education system, and when they sense that there is a problem, they deserve the right to have a voice, and for that voice to be heard.

Parents deserve the right to know what is being taught. There are too many classrooms in America that take time away from reading, science, mathematics, and history that time to inappropriate, age-inappropriate explicit sexual education, historically inaccurate critical race theory, and fluid gender ideology. Parents are the ones most invested in their child’s education—you will not find someone who more cares about the success of a child, and research continually shows that parental involvement yields measurable and consistent success.

Furthermore, it is our most vulnerable students who often suffer the most when schools focus on agendas other than academic success. Minority and lower income children are too often trapped in under-performing schools, vulnerable to the ideological agenda of the left infiltrating their curriculum and failing victim to the education establishment’s monopoly system.

This important legislation directly identifies and protects the rights that parents inherently hold.

As Chair of the House Values Action Team, as a Representative for the Fourth Congressional District of Alabama, and most importantly, as a father of two, I support the Parents Bill of Rights and urge its passage. This legislation matters, because children matter, and parents matter.

Ms. McCOLLUM. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to H.R. 5, the Politics Over Parents Act. This bill is an attempt by House Republicans to attack public education in America and restrict the free exchange of ideas that fosters critical thinking. It is part of a harmful, nationwide extremist Republican march toward censorship and book bans. For example, in the 2021–2022 School Year, the most banned book titles included ‘Beloved’ and ‘The Bluest Eye’ by the groundbreaking author and Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison—not unlike the way ‘To Kill a Mockingbird’ by Harper Lee has been the subject of book bans since the 1960s.

This censorship deprives students of opportunities to learn, grow, and obtain information from a variety of perspectives. Other types of censorship under this bill would deprive students of an accurate and fact-based education.

The strength of America comes from its diversity. But instead of delivering the support and resources our schools need, so-called
“parents’ rights” bills like this empower ex-tremists to impose their beliefs on all students and parents.

My mother worked in a library. She taught me it is important that every child in every community has a safe place to learn and grow. Democrats are focused on improving public education, making our schools safer, and ensuring schools and students have what they need to recover from the pandemic. This legislation is irresponsible and is yet another divisive political stunt by the Republi-can majority. It should be rejected.

The Acting CHAIR. All time for gen-eral debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

In lieu of the amendment in the na-ture of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Education and the Workforce, printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the 5-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 118-2. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 5
Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Rep-resentatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
This Act may be cited as the “Parents Bill of Rights Act”.

TITLE I—AMENDMENTS TO THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965
SEC. 101. STATE PLAN ASSURANCES.
Section 1111(g)(2) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311(g)(2)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (M), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (N), by striking the pe-riod at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(O) the State will ensure that each local educa-tional agency in the State—

(i) in a case in which the curriculum for an elementary or secondary school grade level is not freely and publicly available on the internet, posts on a publicly accessible website of the agency, such curriculum; or

(ii) if such agency does not operate a website, widely disseminates to the public such curriculum; or

(iii) in a case in which the curriculum for an elementary or secondary school grade level is not freely and publicly available on the internet—

(I) posts on a publicly accessible website of the agency—

(aa) a description of such curriculum; and

(bb) information on how parents can re-view such curriculum as described in section 1112(e)(1)(A); or

(II) if such agency does not operate a website, widely disseminates to the public the description and information described in items (aa) and (bb) of clause (I); and

(IV) in the case of any revisions to the State educational standards (including any revisions to the levels of achievement within the State’s academic achievement standards), the State edu-cational agency will post to the homepage of its website, and widely disseminate to the public, notice of such revisions and a copy of such revision; and the State educational agency shall not be required to submit such notice or such revisions to the Sec-retary.”.

SEC. 102. LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY REPORT CARDS.
Section 1111(h)(2) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311(h)(2)) is amended by inserting at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(E) BUDGET.—Each local educational agency report card shall include the budget for the school year for which such report card is being prepared (including all reve nues and expenditures (including expendi-tures made to private entities)) for the local educational agency as a whole, and for each elementary school and secondary school served by the local educational agency. In addition to the detailed budget information required under the preceding sentence, the agency shall include a separate fact sheet that summarizes such information in a clear and easily understandable format.”

SEC. 103. LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY PLAN ASSURANCES.
Section 1112(c) of the Elementary and Sec-ondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6312(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (6), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in paragraph (7), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(8) meet the requirements described in section 1111(g)(2)(O);

(9) post on a publicly accessible website of the local educational agency or, if the local educational agency does not operate a website, widely disseminate to the public, the plan for carrying out the parent and fam-i-ly engagement described in section 1116 and all policies and procedures that result from such engagement;

(10) ensure that each elementary school served by the local educational agency notifies the parents of any student enrolled at such school when the student does not score at grade-level proficient in reading or lan-guage arts at the end of the third grade based on the reading or language arts assess-ments administered under section 1111(h)(2) by another assessment administered to all third grade students by such school; and

(11) ensure that each elementary school and secondary school served by the local educational agency provides to the parents of students enrolled at such school, before a person speaks (in-person or virtually) to such students in a class, school assembly, or any other school-sponsored event, notice that includes the name of the speaker and the name of the organization or other entity being represented.”

SEC. 104. PARENTS RIGHT-TO-KNOW.
Section 1112(e) of the Elementary and Sec-ondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6312(e)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (1), (2), (3), and (4) as paragraphs (2), (3), (4), and (6), re-spectively; and

(2) by inserting before paragraph (2) (as so redesignated), the following:

“(1) NOTICE OF RIGHTS.—A local edu-ca-tional agency receiving funds under this part shall ensure that each elementary school and secondary school served by such agency posts on a publicly accessible website of the school or, if the school does not oper-ate a website, widely disseminates to the public, a summary notice of the right of par-ents to information about their children’s education as required under this Act, which shall be in an understandable format for par-ents and include, at minimum—

(A) the right to review, and make copies of, at no cost, the curriculum of their child’s school;

(B) the right to know if the State alters the State’s challenging State academic standards;

(C) the right to meet with each teacher of their child not less than twice during each school year in accordance with paragraph (5)(A); and

(D) the right to review the budget, including all revenues and expenditures, of their child’s school;

(E) the right to—

(i) a list of the books and other reading materials available in the library of their child’s school; and

(ii) inspect such books or other reading mat-erials;

(F) the right to information about all schools in which their child can enroll, in-cluding options for enrolling in or transfer-ring to—

(i) other schools served by the local edu-ca-tional agency;

(ii) charter schools; and

(iii) schools served by a different local educational agency in the State;

(G) the right to address the school board of the local educational agency;

(H) the right to information about violent activity in their child’s school;

(i) the right to information about any plans to eliminate gifted and talented pro-grams in the child’s school;

(j) the right to review any professional development materials;

(K) the right to know if their child is not grade-level proficient in reading or language arts at the end of the third grade as de-scribed in subsection (c)(10);

(L) the right to know if a school employee or contractor acts to—

(i) change a minor child’s gender mark-ers, pronouns, or preferred name; or

(ii) allow a child to change the child’s sex-based accommodations, including locker rooms or bathrooms;

(M) the right to know if—

(i) a school employee or contractor acts to—

(A) treat, advise, or address the bullying of a student;

(B) treat, advise, or address the bullying or hazing of a student;

(C) treat, advise, or address a student’s mental health, suicidal ideation, or in-stances of self-harm;

(D) treat, advise, or address a specific threat to the safety of a student;

(E) treat, advise, or address the posses-sion or use of drugs and other controlled substances; or

(F) treat, advise, or address an eating disor-der; or

(ii) a child brings a weapon to school; and

(N) the right to the notice described in subsection (c)(11) before a person speaks (in-person or virtually) to a child in a class, school assembly, or any other school-spon-sored event.”;

(2) in paragraph (2)(A) (as redesignated by paragraph (1))—

(A) by redesigning clause (i) and clause (ii) as subclause (I) and subclause (II), re-spectively;

(B) by striking “(B) ADDITIONAL INFORMA-TION.—” and inserting:

“(B) ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.—

(I) in general.—”;

and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(ii) SCHOOL LIBRARY.—A local educational agency receiving funds under this part shall
ensure that each elementary school and secondary school served by such agency provides the parents of each child who is a student in such school—

"(1) Disclosure of each student, a list of books and other reading materials available in the library of such school; and

"(2) the opportunity to inspect such books and other reading materials.

"(III) VIOLENT ACTIVITY.—A local educational agency receiving funds under this part shall ensure that each elementary school and secondary school served by such agency provides the parents of each child who is a student in such school timely notification of any violent activity occurring on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities in which one or more individuals suffer injuries, except that such notification shall not contain names or the grade level of any students involved in the activity.

"(IV) GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAMS.—A local educational agency receiving funds under this part shall ensure that each elementary school and secondary school served by such agency provides the parents of each child who is a student in such school the opportunity to meet, in-person or virtually via videoconference, with each teacher of such child not less than twice during each school year; and

"(V) TRANSPARENCY.—A local educational agency receiving funds under this part shall provide the parents of each child who is a student in an elementary school or secondary school served by such agency:

"(A) the opportunity to meet, in-person or virtually via videoconference with each teacher of such child not less than twice during each school year; and

"(B) the opportunity to address the school board of such local educational agency on issues impacting the education of children in such agency.

SEC. 105. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS.

Title VIII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801 et seq.) is amended—

(1) by redesignating section 8549C as section 8549D; and

(2) by inserting after section 8549B the following new section:

"SEC. 8549C. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS.

"(a) Findings.—Congress finds the following:

"(1) Parents have a First Amendment right to express their opinions on decisions made by their local school leaders.

"(2) States and local educational agencies shall empower parents to communicate regularly with Federal, State, and local policymakers regarding the impact of educational policy and the well-being of their children.

"(3) Transparent and cooperative relationships between parents and schools have significant and long-lasting positive effects on the development of children.

"(4) Parents' concerns over content and pedagogy deserve to be heard and fully considered by school professionals.

"(5) Parent and other community input about schools that is presented in a lawful and appropriate manner should always be encouraged by school professionals.

"(6) Educators, policymakers, elected officials, Executive Branch officials and employees, and other stakeholders should never seek to undermine or prevent the lawful expressed concerns of parents about their children's education, and should never hesitate to contact public safety officials if there is a credible threat to the safety and security of students, parents, educators, policymakers, elected officials, Executive Branch officials or employees, or other stakeholders, school faculty, or staff.

"(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the First Amendment guarantees the right of parents and other stakeholders the right to assemble and express their opinions on decisions affecting their children and communities, and that educators and policymakers should engage in the engagement and consider that feedback when making decisions.

TITILE II—AMENDMENTS TO FERPA AND OTHER RIGHTS AND PRIVACIES

SEC. 201. AMENDMENTS TO THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT OF 1974.

(a) ENFORCEMENT.—Section 444(f) of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) (also known as the "Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974") is amended by adding at the end the following: "The Secretary shall comply with the reporting requirement under section 445(c) with respect to the enforcement actions taken under this subsection to ensure compliance with this section."

(b) PROHIBITION ON EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES OR INSTITUTIONS ACTING AS AN AGENT OF A LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—Section 445(b) of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) (also known as the "Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974") is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(k) PROHIBITION ON EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES OR INSTITUTIONS ACTING AS AN AGENT OF A LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—An educational agency or institution may not act as the agent of a parent of a student in attendance at a school of such agency or at such institution for purposes of providing supplemental material which will be used in the classrooms for purposes of educating the student without providing notice and an opportunity for the parent to object to the use of such technology.

"(1) PROHIBITION ON EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES OR INSTITUTIONS ACTING AS AGENT OF A PARENT FOR USE OF TECHNOLOGY.—An educational agency or institution may not act as the agent of a parent of a student in attendance at a school of such agency or at such institution for purposes of providing supplemental material which will be used in the classrooms for purposes of educating the student without providing notice and an opportunity for the parent to object to the use of such technology.

"(o) DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION.—An educational agency or institution may not act as the agent of a parent of a student in attendance at a school of such agency or at such institution for purposes of providing supplemental material which will be used in the classrooms for purposes of educating the student without providing notice and an opportunity for the parent to object to the use of such technology.

"(q) PROHIBITION ON EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES OR INSTITUTIONS ACTING AS AN AGENT OF A PARENT FOR USE OF TECHNOLOGY.—An educational agency or institution may not act as the agent of a parent of a student in attendance at a school of such agency or at such institution for purposes of providing supplemental material which will be used in the classrooms for purposes of educating the student without providing notice and an opportunity for the parent to object to the use of such technology.

"(t) PROHIBITION ON EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES OR INSTITUTIONS ACTING AS AN AGENT OF A PARENT FOR USE OF TECHNOLOGY.—An educational agency or institution may not act as the agent of a parent of a student in attendance at a school of such agency or at such institution for purposes of providing supplemental material which will be used in the classrooms for purposes of educating the student without providing notice and an opportunity for the parent to object to the use of such technology.

"(u) PROHIBITION ON EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES OR INSTITUTIONS ACTING AS AN AGENT OF A PARENT FOR USE OF TECHNOLOGY.—An educational agency or institution may not act as the agent of a parent of a student in attendance at a school of such agency or at such institution for purposes of providing supplemental material which will be used in the classrooms for purposes of educating the student without providing notice and an opportunity for the parent to object to the use of such technology.

"(v) PROHIBITION ON EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES OR INSTITUTIONS ACTING AS AN AGENT OF A PARENT FOR USE OF TECHNOLOGY.—An educational agency or institution may not act as the agent of a parent of a student in attendance at a school of such agency or at such institution for purposes of providing supplemental material which will be used in the classrooms for purposes of educating the student without providing notice and an opportunity for the parent to object to the use of such technology.

"(w) PROHIBITION ON EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES OR INSTITUTIONS ACTING AS AN AGENT OF A PARENT FOR USE OF TECHNOLOGY.—An educational agency or institution may not act as the agent of a parent of a student in attendance at a school of such agency or at such institution for purposes of providing supplemental material which will be used in the classrooms for purposes of educating the student without providing notice and an opportunity for the parent to object to the use of such technology.

"(x) PROHIBITION ON EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES OR INSTITUTIONS ACTING AS AN AGENT OF A PARENT FOR USE OF TECHNOLOGY.—An educational agency or institution may not act as the agent of a parent of a student in attendance at a school of such agency or at such institution for purposes of providing supplemental material which will be used in the classrooms for purposes of educating the student without providing notice and an opportunity for the parent to object to the use of such technology.

"(y) PROHIBITION ON EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES OR INSTITUTIONS ACTING AS AN AGENT OF A PARENT FOR USE OF TECHNOLOGY.—An educational agency or institution may not act as the agent of a parent of a student in attendance at a school of such agency or at such institution for purposes of providing supplemental material which will be used in the classrooms for purposes of educating the student without providing notice and an opportunity for the parent to object to the use of such technology.
[Extract from Congressional Record]

"(D) The administration of medical examinations or screenings that the school or agency may administer to a student, including—

(1) prior notice to parents of such a medical examination or screening, and receipt of consent from parents before administering such an examination or screening; and

(2) in the event of an emergency that requires a medical examination or screening without time for parental notification and consent, the procedure for promptly notifying parents of such examination or screening subsequent to such examination or screening; and

(D) by amending subparagraph (E) to read as follows:

"(E) CONSULTATION AND NOTIFICATION.—In developing and updating the policies under paragraph (2), the local educational agency shall ensure that such policy is developed with meaningful engagement by parents of students enrolled in schools served by such agency and agencies that receive funds under any applicable program.

(1) SEC. 401. REQUIREMENT RELATED TO GENDER MARKERS, PRONOUNS, AND PREFERRRED NAMES ON SCHOOL FORMS.

(2) SEC. 501. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

(3) SEC. 601. SENSE OF CONGRESS.
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those printed in House Report 118–12. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, by the Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the order, may be divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. BACON

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in House Report 118–12.

Mr. BACON. Madam Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 9, line 4, strike “and” at the end.

Page 9, line 9, strike the period, closed quotation mark, and semicolon and insert “;” and.

Page 9, after line 9, insert the following:

“(O) the right to be informed of the total number of school counselors in their child’s school.”

Page 11, line 4, strike the closed quotation mark and “;” and.

Page 11, after line 4, insert the following new clause:

“(V) School Counselors.—A local educational agency receiving funds under this part shall ensure that each elementary school and secondary school served by such agency provides the parents of each child who is a student in such school the information described in paragraph (1)(O).”

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution No. 241, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BACON) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

Mr. BACON. Madam Chair, I rise to offer an amendment to H.R. 5 that supports students, parents, and school personnel in ensuring that every child who would benefit from having a counselor would have access to one. The amendment would add that local education agencies provide to parents the number of school counselors employed at their child’s school so that parents have a better idea about their child’s education and safety during the school day.

As we all know, school counselors play an important role not only in the academic and career development of our students, but they address emotional challenges that are a critical component of safety in our schools. This simple provision gives parents the full knowledge and transparency needed to decide if their children need additional resources outside of the academic environment. This can assist our educators in making sure our children are best prepared for school and learning.

So, Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment which has support from both sides of the aisle. A happy and healthy student empowers our educators to provide the best possible education, and parents deserve to be empowered to best help their children achieve that.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Chair, as with most of the underlying bill, this is yet another unfunded mandate placed on our schools requiring them to issue yet another report as a condition of receiving much-needed title I funds.

The majority would prefer to impose additional burdens to already understaffed schools rather than do what they were trained to do, and that is teach and work with parents.

I would agree with the gentleman’s comments about the need for counselors. He is absolutely right. We need more counselors. However, this amendment does not increase the number of counselors. It just reports the number they have. It doesn’t improve students’ mental health.

So for those reasons, Madam Chair, since it doesn’t improve mental health or increase the number of counselors, I oppose the amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BACON. Madam Chair, this amendment doesn’t increase the number of counselors, but it allows the parents to know if the number of counselors is adequate or not. This is very important for our parents to have.

This is being requested by teachers and parents. I have received this request from teachers and parents to have this added to the bill because they said it will make the bill better.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BACON. Madam Chair, I will close by saying that I would appreciate the support of both sides of the aisle. This bill has support from teachers and parents to have this added in.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BACON).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MS. FOXX

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in House Report 118–12.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Chair, I rise in support of my amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 6, line 13, insert after “right” the following: “(provided in accordance with the requirements of section 445(a)(2) of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. §1232h(a)(2)) with respect to such local educational agency)”.

Page 11, line 4, strike the closed quotes, and “;” and, substitute the following:

“(V) Enrollment Options.—A local educational agency receiving funds under this part shall ensure that each elementary school and secondary school served by such agency provides the parents of each child who is a student in such school if a school employee or contractor takes, with respect to each child, any action described in clause (i) or (ii) of paragraph (1)(L).

(VII) School and Student Safety.—A local educational agency receiving funds under this part shall ensure that each elementary school and secondary school served by such agency provides the parents of each child who is a student in such school the opportunity to review professional development materials to ensure the parent right described in paragraph (1)(J); and”.

Page 13, line 3, strike “Title VIII” and insert the following:

(a) In General.—Title VIII

Page 13, line 3, insert the following:

(b) Table of Contents. The table of contents in section 2 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 is amended—

(1) by striking the item relating to section 8549C; and

(2) by inserting after the item relating to section 8549B the following:

Sec. 8549C. Sense of Congress on First Amendment Rights.

Sec. 8549D. Technical assistance.

Page 12, after line 13, insert the following new paragraph, and redesignate the succeeding paragraphs accordingly:

“(1) The right of parents to educate their children in a pre-political natural right that the U.S. Supreme Court has recognized as ‘beyond debate’ and rooted in the ‘history and culture of Western civilization’.

Page 13, line 15 through 21, and insert the following:

(b) Sense of Congress.—It is the sense of Congress that—

“(1) The First Amendment guarantees parents and other stakeholders the right to assemble and express their opinions on decisions affecting their children and communities, and that educators and policymakers should welcome and encourage that engagement and consider that feedback when making decisions; and

“(2) Parents have a fundamental right, protected by the U.S. Constitution, to direct the education of their children, and the strict scrutiny test used by courts to evaluate cases concerning fundamental rights is the correct standard of review for government actions that interfere with the right of parents to educate their children.”

Page 28, line 22, insert “from the Department of Education” after “Federal funds.”

Page 29, line 2, insert “such” before “Federal funds.”

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution No. 241, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX)
and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina. Ms. FOXX. Madam Chair, it has been a pleasure to support the Parents Bill of Rights Act—especially proud of the work that our committee has put into crafting this bill.

Our committee worked late into the night and early morning and considered dozens of amendments. Nearly 20 were adopted to make the bill even better. I am proud that we have reported to the floor a commonsense bill that has broad support and aligns with what the vast majority of Americans want.

The amendments we passed during the committee markup accomplished the same goal we had when writing the bill: protecting parents’ rights and making sure that schools can never cut parents out of their children’s education decisions.

This manager’s amendment makes a few minor technical changes to make sure that the amendments we passed during the committee markup will be implemented correctly and that the rights promised are fulfilled.

In addition, the manager’s amendment adds language to the First Amendment’s sense of Congress included in the underlying bill. The new language affirms the fundamental rights of parents to direct the education of their children and encourages courts to use the strict scrutiny standard in evaluating cases related to parental rights.

Schools should always be accountable to parents, and the parents should always know what their children are being taught and what their children are being exposed to. The Parents Bill of Rights Act protects those fundamental rights.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of both this amendment and the underlying bill. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Chair, this is another effort to turn classrooms into the epicenter of a culture war. The politics over parents act doesn’t do anything to actually help students succeed and seeks to scare parents into thinking that schools are being taught and what their children are being exposed to. The Parents Bill of Rights Act protects those fundamental rights.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of both this amendment and the underlying bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Chair, from Virginia I think will remember that I believe it was in the Loudoun County Public Schools where the father of a child who had been sexually molested in a bathroom by a young boy dressed as a girl who then was transferred to another school, and the parents were never notified that this had happened, when the father stood up at the school board meeting to bring this issue up, he was not allowed to speak. Furthermore, he was arrested. He was wrestled to the ground and arrested.

So, again, we hear from our colleagues two different scenarios: one, well, parents already have the right to address the school board. Yes. That is in our First Amendment. We have the right to petition our elected officials for grievances. However, that is not happening as we have seen in certain places.

Whether or not there is a time limit, I would hope that people would be reasonable about that, but we are not dictating that. That will be dealt with. As the gentleman says, those school board members in most cases are elected, and it will be up to them to deal with the public in that respect. If they don’t do it correctly, then my assumption is that there will be consequences.

Madam Chair, the manager’s amendment, again, strengthens the underlying bill, I urge its adoption, and I also urge passage of H.R. 5.

With this legislation we have an opportunity to make a stand for the rights of parents. I hope all my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will vote with what they believe, which is that parents have rights and that we want to have the best education for children.

Madam Chair, join us in this effort, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MRS. BOEBERT

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 3 printed in House Report No. 118–12.

Mrs. BOEBERT. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 9, line 4, strike “and”.

Page 9, line 9, strike the semicolon, closed quotation marks, and period and insert “;” and “.”.

Page 9, after line 9, insert the following:

“(O) the right to know if their child’s school operates, sponsors, or facilitates athletic programs or activities that permit an individual whose biological sex is male to participate in an athletic program or activity that is designated for individuals whose biological sex is female.”.

Page 11, line 4, strike the closed quotation marks and “;” and “.”.

Page 11, after line 4, insert the following:

“(V) ATHLETIC PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES.—A local educational agency receiving funds under this part shall ensure that each elementary school and secondary school served by such agency provides the parents of each child that is a student in such school the information described in paragraph (1)(O);” and “.”

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution No. 241, the gentlewoman from Colorado (Mrs. BOEBERT) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes. The Acting Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Colorado.

Mrs. BOEBERT. Madam Chair, this amendment is simple and straightforward. My amendment simply requires notification to parents if their child’s school operates, sponsors, or facilitates athletic programs or activities to permit a person whose biological sex is male to participate in an athletic program or activity that is designated for biological females.

Madam Chair, women’s sports are under attack. Woke policies backed by far-left extremists who demand male participation in female sports are completely delusional and contradic
science. This allows men who identify as women to undermine legitimate women’s accomplishments. American women and girls deserve to compete against biological women in sports, opportunities for athletic scholarships, and the rightful place on the winner’s podium without the fear of being sidelined and beat out by a biological male.

This was on complete display when William Thomas, a biological man who previously competed in men’s swimming, stole Emma Weyant’s first-place trophy at the 2022 NCAA Division I Women’s 500-Yard Freestyle Final.

Mr. Thomas stole Emma’s championship trophy and took former Olympic style and won the 500-yard freestyle. This mediocre male athlete, Mr. Thomas, ranked fifth in the 200-yard freestyle and 65th in the 500-yard freestyle. After deciding to compete against women, and ranked fifth in the 200-yard freestyle and won the 500-yard freestyle.

Mr. Thomas stole Emma’s championship trophy and took former Olympic swimmer Reka Gyorgy’s spot in the 2022 NCAA Division I swim meet.

I am a cosponsor of Representative Crenshaw’s bill, H.R. 794, the Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act of 2023. Madam Chair, as I said, the NCAA is working on this, and I just assume rather than disparage trans youth, let them work it out. Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Chair, did the gentlewoman yield back her time?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Colorado yielded back the remainder of her time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Chair, as I said, the NCAA is working on this, and I just assume rather than disparage trans youth, let them work it out.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Colorado (Mrs. BOEBERT). The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 4 OFFERED BY MRS. BOEBERT

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider Amendment No. 4 printed in House Report 118-12.

Mrs. BOEBERT. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment. The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 9, line 4, strike “and.”

Page 9, line 9, strike the semicolon, closed quotation marks, and period and insert “;” and “.”

Page 9, after line 9, insert the following:

“(O) the right to know if their child’s school allows males to participate in female-designated sports.

Page 11, line 4, strike the closed quotation marks and “;” and “.”

Page 11, after line 4, insert the following:

“(v) ACCOMMODATIONS.—A local educational agency receiving funds under this part shall ensure that each elementary school and secondary school served by such agency provides parents of each child who is a student in such school the information described in paragraph (1)(O).”; and

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 241, the gentlewoman from Colorado (Mrs. BOEBERT) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Colorado.

Mrs. BOEBERT. Madam Chair, I rise in favor of my amendment, which will require schools to notify parents if they allow biological males to use restrooms or changing rooms designated for biological females.

Throughout our debate today, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have continued to mischaracterize this bill as extreme. They harp on the same talking points, saying that this bill is looking to ban books, censor curriculums, and punish teachers. I would like any child’s pornographic books to be banned, but that is not exactly what we are talking about here in this amendment.

All the while, under Democrat control, we have seen public K–12 schools promote: critical race theory, teaching children to hate their country and even drag shows to impressional young children. That is what is extreme.

A school in my home State of Colorado has even changed a child’s gender pronouns and preferred names and kept that information from the child’s parents.

Speaking as the mother of four boys and a soon-to-be grandma, enough is enough. I don’t send my boys to school to receive indoctrination from the woke mob or be sexualized by groomers. If they are, I use heck want to know about it and have the right to speak up, and so do these parents.

Let me set the record straight. House Republicans want parents to be involved in their child’s education. We want to take control back as parents of our children’s education rather than leaving it to partisan politicians or unelected bureaucrats. We don’t want to send the FBI after them as domestic terrorists.

We want to foster an active learning environment, not shut schools down and enforce outdated and unnecessary mask and vaccine mandates on our children. We want children to feel safe in our schools, and not worry for school administrative staff to hide a sexual assault from parents, like we saw in Loudoun County.

Less than 2 years ago, about 30 miles from here, a ninth-grade girl was sexually assaulted by a man wearing a skirt in the women’s restroom at school. This male was allowed to follow the victim into the restroom because of Loudoun County Public Schools’ inclusive transgender bathroom policies.

When the father of the victim came to a school board meeting to protest these policies that caused his teenage daughter to be raped, he was arrested after an altercation with a woman who...
said that she didn’t believe his daugh-
ter was raped. The superintendent also
defended the school’s transgender baths-
room policy at that meeting.

The man in the skirt was found
guilty of two counts of forcible sod-
omy, a count of sodomy, and a count of forcible fellatio. He was also
charged with the sexual assault of an-
other student that occurred months later
at a different Loudoun County school.

The left’s ideology is far more delu-
sional, and it is dangerous. These in-
clusive policies have paved the way for
sexual predators to use the left’s defi-
nition of gender to take advantage of their victims. Unfortunately, this is
just one example of many biological males using bathrooms to assault
women and children.

Madam Chair, my amendment would
grant parents the right to know if
schools that their children are attend-
 ing are forcing their children to share
vulnerable spaces with potential predato-
rs.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues
to support my amendment, and I re-
serve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Chair,
I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman
is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Chair,
I don’t think we need a Federal law
to tell schools tell students which
bathroom to use.

In Loudoun County, that situation is
under investigation, including criminal
charges. I think it is time we stop dis-
 paraging trans youth.

Madam Chair, I yield back the bal-
ance of my time.

Mrs. BOEBERT. Madam Chair, I yield
back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is
on the amendment offered by the gent-
lady from Colorado (Mrs. BOEBERT).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 5 OFFERED BY MS. BONAMICI

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order
to consider amendment No. 5 printed in
House Report 118–12.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Chair, I have
a substitute amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will
designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as fol-
lows:

Page 1, strike line 1 and all that follows
and insert the following:

TITLE I—FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS

SEC. 101. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Education is fundamental to the de-
development of individual citizens and the
progress of the Nation.

(2) There is a continuing need to ensure
equal access for all students to educational
opportunities of high quality, and such edu-
cational opportunities should not be denied
because of race, religion, color, national
origin, disability, or sex (including sexual ori-
entation and gender identity).

(3) Parents have the primary responsibility
for the education of their children, and

States and localities have the primary re-
sponsibility for supporting that parental
role.

(4) In our current system, the primary pub-
lic responsibility for education is retained
respectively to the States and the local
school systems and other instrumentalities
of the States.

(5) The importance of education is increas-
ing as new technologies and alternative ap-
proaches to traditional education are consid-
ered, as society becomes more complex, and
as equal opportunities in education and em-
ployment are promoted.

(6) The purposes of the Department of Edu-
cation include:

(A) to strengthen the Federal commitment
to ensuring access to equal educational op-
portunity for every individual;

(B) to supplement and complement the ef-
forts of States, the local school systems and
other instrumentalities of the States, the
private sector, public and private edu-
cational institutions, public and private non-
profit educational research institutions,
community-based organizations, parents,
and students to improve the quality of edu-
cation;

(C) to encourage the increased involvement
of the public, parents, and students in Fed-
eral education programs;

(D) to promote improvements in the qual-
ity and usefulness of education through fed-
erally supported research, evaluation, and
sharing of information;

(E) to improve the coordination of Federal
education programs;

(F) to improve the management and effi-
cency of Federal education activities, espe-
cially with respect to the processes, proce-
dures, and administrative structures for the
disposal of Federal funds, as well as the re-
duction of unnecessary and duplicative bur-
dens and constraints, including unnecessary
paperwork, on the recipients of Federal
funds; and

(G) to increase the accountability of Fed-
eral education programs to the President,
the Congress, and the public.

(7) Parents, families, students, educators,
and community members are key stake-
holders in the public education system and
provide valuable input with respect to such
education system.

(8) When parents, families, students,
schools, and community members work to-
tgether, students have better school attend-
ance, earn higher test scores, and have
longer term success.

(9) All students deserve an education that
helps them develop important life skills and
prepares them for success in and beyond the
classroom.

(10) An inclusive education benefits all stu-
dents, not just by making them feel valued
and accepted, but also by helping them build
important knowledge and skills that will
prepare them for future success and create
a safer environment for all students.

(11) The United States has much to be
proud of and learning about the history of
our Nation helps students see how far we’ve
come and how they can continue our pro-
gress.

(12) Federal law contains numerous provi-
sions that protect parental rights in elemen-
tary and secondary education, including the
following:

(A) Sections 1111(b)(2)(B)(x), 1112(e)(4),
and 1114(f) of the Elementary and Secondary
Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
6311(b)) gives parents the right to know how
their child’s school is performing.

(B) Section 1112(e)(2) of the Elementary
and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20
U.S.C. 6312(e)(1)), gives parents of children in
schools receiving funds under part A of title I
such Act the right to

(i) know the professional qualifications of
the teachers and paraprofessionals who teach
their children;

(ii) receive information about the level of
achievement of their children; and

(iii) receive notice that their children have
been taught for 4 or more consecutive weeks
by a teacher who does not meet applicable
State certification or licensure require-
ments.

(C) Section 1112(e)(2) of the Elementary
and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20
U.S.C. 6312(e)(2)), gives parents of children in
schools receiving funds under part A of title I
of such Act the right to receive information
regarding any State or local educational agen-
cy policy regarding allocation of funds in
any assessments mandated by section
1111(b)(2) of such Act and by the State or
local educational agency, which must in-
clude in the policy, parents’ right to opt the
child out of such assessments, where applicable.

(D) Section 1112(e)(3)(A) of the Elementary
and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20
U.S.C. 6312(e)(3)(A)) gives parents of children
identified as English learners and who are
participating in a language instruction ed-
uational program under title I of such Act
the right to receive information with respect
to the reasons for that identification, level of
English proficiency, methods of instruction,
academic needs, exit criteria, individualized
education plan objectives, if applicable, and
the right to remove their children from the program.

(E) Section 1112(e)(3)(C) of the Elementary
and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20
U.S.C. 6312(e)(3)(C)) gives parents of English
language learners in a local educational agency
that receives funds under part A of title I of
such Act the right to receive information
regardless of the State’s participation in the
Title I of such Act the right to receive information with respect
to the reasons for that identification, level of
English proficiency, methods of instruction, academic needs, exit criteria, individualized education plan objectives, if applicable, and
the right to remove their children from the program.

(F) Section 1112(e)(3)(A) of the Elementary
and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20
U.S.C. 6312(e)(3)(A)) gives parents of children
identified as English learners and who are
participating in a language instruction ed-
uational program under title I of such Act
the right to receive information with respect
to the reasons for that identification, level of
English proficiency, methods of instruction,
academic needs, exit criteria, individualized education plan objectives, if applicable, and
the right to remove their children from the program.

(G) Section 1112(e)(3)(C) of the Elementary
and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20
U.S.C. 6312(e)(3)(C)) gives parents of English
language learners in a local educational agency
that receives funds under part A of title I of
such Act the right to receive information
regardless of the State’s participation in the
Title I of such Act the right to receive information with respect
to the reasons for that identification, level of
English proficiency, methods of instruction,
academic needs, exit criteria, individualized education plan objectives, if applicable, and
the right to remove their children from the program.
Statewide Family Engagement Center under 6318(g)) requires schools and local educational agencies to provide parents with the opportunity to participate in part A of title I of such Act; and

(ii) that explains the requirements of such part, including that parents have a right to be involved;

(iii) that discusses parent and family engagement policy;

(ii) to be involved in the planning, review, and improvement of programs including the schoolwide family engagement policy and the joint development of the schoolwide program;

(iii) timely information about such programs, a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the achievement levels of the challenging State academic standards; and

(iv) if requested by parents, opportunities for regular meetings to make suggestions and participate, in decisions relating to the education of their children.

(L) Section 1116(d) of the Elementary Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 618(d)) gives parents the right to jointly develop with their child’s school, if the school receives funds under part A of title I of such Act, a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the school staff, and students will share responsibility for improved student academic achievement and how the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help the children achieve the State’s high standards, including—

(i) the importance of ongoing communication between the teacher and parents through parent-teacher conferences;

(ii) frequent reports to parents about their children’s progress;

(iii) reasonable access to staff; and

(iv) opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child’s class and observe classroom activities.

(M) Section 9200(e) of the Elementary Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6318(e)) requires school and local educational agency served under part A of title I of the Act—

(i) to provide to parents assistance, materials, and training to ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership between the school and parents, and to the community to improve student academic achievement;

(ii) to educate teachers, specialized instructional personnel, principals, and other school leaders and staff about—

(I) the value and utility of contributions of parents and

(II) how parents can be involved in instruction in the general education curriculum, including—

(aa) reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners;

(bb) implement and coordinate parent programs;

(cc) build ties between parents and the school; and

(iii) to receive information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities in a format and, to the extent practicable, a language the parents can understand.

(N) Section 1118(g) of the Elementary Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6318(g)) requires schools and local educational agencies in a State operating a Statewide Family Engagement Center to carry out parent participation in part IV of such Act and conducted in connection with an elementary or secondary school under such title of such Act.

(P) Section 4502 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7252) authorizes the Secretary of Education to award grants to State Family Engagement Centers to carry out parent education and family engagement in education programs, or provide comprehensive training and technical assistance to State educational agencies, local educational agencies, schools identified by State educational and local educational agencies, organizations that support family-school partnerships and other organizations that carry out such programs.


(i) gives parents of secondary school students the right to submit a written request to the school for a copy of the child’s record and to review such record, with prior written consent of the parent, and

(ii) upon receiving such a request, prohibits the local educational agency from releasing the student’s name, address, and telephone listing for purposes of that request without the prior written consent of the parent.

(R) Section 1116 and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7292) prohibits the Department of Education from relying on such Act to—

(i) prohibit a parental determination that a child may travel to or from school on foot or by car, bus, or bike when the parents of the child have given permission; or

(ii) expose parents to civil or criminal charges for allowing their child to responsibly and safely travel to and from school by means the parents believe is age appropriate.

(S) Section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 2262(c)) gives parents the right to inspect and review student education records maintained by educational agencies or institutions, to—

(i) inspect and review such education records;

(ii) seek amendment of such education records where they contain information that is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of a student; and

(iii) with some exceptions, exercise some control over the disclosure of personally identifiable information from such education records.

(T) Section 445(c)(1) of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 2262(c)(1)) requires that parents be consulted about the development and adoption of policies by a local educational agency, which is defined for purposes of that subsection to include an elementary school, secondary school, school district, or local board of education that receives funds under an applicable program, to provide parents with the right to inspect, upon request—

(i) certain surveys;

(ii) instruments used to collect personal information from students for the purpose of tracking, disseminating, or distributing such information for that purpose, with some exceptions; and

(iii) instructional materials used as part of the educational curriculum for the student.

(U) Section 445(c)(2) of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 2262(c)(2)) requires that the recipient shall ensure that each elementary school and each secondary school under the jurisdiction of the agency has at least 1 full-time employee designated to serve as a parent coordinator.

(a) IN GENERAL.—For each local educational agency (as defined in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (8 U.S.C. 7801)) that receives financial assistance under such Act, the following requirements shall apply as a condition on continued receipt of such assistance:

(1) The recipient shall ensure that each elementary school and each secondary school under the jurisdiction of the agency has at least 1 full-time employee designated to serve as a parent coordinator.

(2) The recipient shall ensure that students, parents, school staff, and parent...
(3) A parent coordinator should not have any other school-related responsibilities that create a conflict of interest, including serving in the school administrative leadership or local educational agency administrative leadership (such as serving as a principal, assistant principal, headmaster, superintendent, board member, or general counsel).

(b) DUTIES.—Each parent coordinator described in subsection (a) shall—
(1) establish partnerships with parents, parent-teacher associations, and other parent groups within the community to provide resources and support for parents, students, and schools;
(2) ensure that parents, parent-teacher associations, and other parent groups within the community are familiar with the academic expectations of a school in order to improve student success;
(3) strengthen relationships between the school and parents in the community;
(4) ensure that parents understand their rights under section 1116 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311 et seq.); and
(A) the right to meaningfully participate in the development of—
(i) a parent and family engagement policy for the local educational agency in accordance with subsection (a) of such section; and
(ii) a parent and family engagement policy of the school in accordance with subsection (a) of such section;
(B) the right to attend, at the school’s invitation and encouragement, an annual meeting—
(i) where parents will be informed about the school’s participation in part D of title I of such Act (20 U.S.C. 6311 et seq.);
(ii) that explains the requirements of such part, including that parents have the right to be involved; and
(iii) that discusses parent and family engagement policy; and
(C) the right to timely information about programs under this part, including a description and explanation of, the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the achievement levels of the challenging State academic standards;
(5) ensure that parents understand their right to give consent before allowing the child to participate in any mental health assessment or service funded by title IV of such Act (20 U.S.C. 6311 et seq.); and
(6) in carrying out paragraphs (1) through (5), focus on parents from underrepresented groups.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024 and each of the 5 succeeding fiscal years.

TITLE III—EESEA AMENDMENTS

SEC. 301. FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

Section 4601 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7264) is amended by striking "$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2018 through 2021" and inserting "$60,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2018 through 2023.

SEC. 302. FULL-SERVICE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS.

Section 4601 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7251) is amended—
(1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1) of subsection (a), by inserting "except for section 4625" after "part";
(2) in the matter preceding clause (1) of subsection (b)(2)(B), by inserting "except for section 4625" after "subpart 2"; and
(3) by adding at the end the following:
"(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out section 4625—
(1) $500,000,000 for fiscal year 2024;
(2) $600,000,000 for fiscal year 2025;
(3) $700,000,000 for fiscal year 2026;
(4) $800,000,000 for fiscal year 2027; and
(5) $900,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2028 through 2028."
Justice Department have all voiced opposition to the rights of parents to have a say in their child's education.

This kind of rhetoric and political posturing has real-world consequences for parents. For example, in 2021, a Rhode Island elementary school principal, Mrs. Solas, talked to an elementary school principal in South Kingstown, Rhode Island, about what was being taught in schools. After persistent stonewalling, the school district directed her to file a public records request. She did, and the local teachers union filed a lawsuit against her.

This kind of treatment is outrageous. Mrs. Solas was subjected to endless stonewalling, public humiliation, and an interminable and costly legal battle. No parent should have to go through that.

The Democrat substitute would do nothing to ensure that stories like this never happen again, but the Parents Bill of Rights Act would. Our bill will ensure that parents can never be sued for wanting to know their child's curriculum.

Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona recently published an op-ed about the Democrat vision for parent empowerment. In his vision, parents should be satisfied when the Federal Government spends taxpayer dollars on top-down solutions. By contrast, Republicans want an authentic give-and-take between parents and the education system about what students learn, how they are taught, and how they should be protected.

That is why I am proud to stand behind our bill.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote against the Democrat substitute and in favor of the Parents Bill of Rights Act.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Chair, in response, I reiterate that every single Democrat on our side of the aisle absolutely supports parental involvement and parental engagement. We talked about that in the debate on the bill.

About costs, it is my understanding that the so-called Parents Bill of Rights Act doesn’t have any additional funding with all the extra obligations that are put on our schools, districts, and teachers. They are in effect to silence parents. We want parents to be involved, peacefully, and peacefully state their concerns.

I know that Ranking Member SCOTT talked about how Democrats tried to put an amendment to put some reasonable conditions that, if you have 200 parents show up at a school board meeting, and each one of them wants to speak for 2 hours, that is not reasonable.

We absolutely support parental involvement. We want to do that. We want to provide that evidence-based engagement and, again, make the relationship collaborative, not adversarial.

That is why I encourage colleagues to support this collaborative, evidence-based approach to involve all parents in education.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. PHOLOX. Madam Chair, I want to say again that the approach our colleagues want to take is to spend more money.

Ms. Solas, who I mentioned earlier; Mr. SMITH, who was mentioned earlier; and others, did not have the right to peacefully speak to their school boards and get responses, so that is not going to happen under the Democrats’ amendment.

We also are not mean, and again, we do not ban books. We do not condone the banning of books.

We think, again, that the substitute presents the perfect picture of Republicans’ and Democrats’ approaches to parent engagement. Democrats believe in giving parents real power to secure the best education possible for their children.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time as I believe I have the right to close.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Chair, I want to say again that our bill is meant to give parents their God-given rights to be involved with their children’s education and to seek the best education possible.

We do not want anyone to be treated unfairly. We want everyone to be treated fairly. We do not ban books.

I urge the public to read this bill. It is fairly short, about 30 pages, to make sure where the truth lies in terms of this piece of legislation.

Madam Chair, I reject the amendment that has been offered in the nature of a substitute. I urge a “no” vote on the amendment and a “yes” vote on H.R. 5.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Oregon will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 6 OFFERED BY MR. CRANE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 6 printed in House Report 118–12.

Mr. CRANE. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 29, after line 20, insert the following:

TITLE VII—PRIVATE RIGHT OF ACTION

SEC. 701. PRIVATE RIGHT OF ACTION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—A parent aggrieved by a failure to comply with a provision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) amended by title II of this Act, or a provision of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1221 et seq.) amended by title II of this Act, may commence a civil action for parents to hold schools accountable for not honoring the rights of parents to be parents and have authority over their own children.

It is also very disgusting, quite frankly, what has been going on in our kids’ schools. Parents across this country—Democrats, Republicans, Independents, all of us—are furious with what is going on at these schools. That is why we even have to do this.

My amendment adds a private right of action for parents to hold schools accountable for not honoring the rights set forth in title I and title II of this bill. It seeks to strengthen enforcement mechanisms within the Parents Bill of Rights Act. My amendment, if passed, would ensure parents can sue if school districts force teachers or students to accommodate critical race theory curriculum, compel students to observe obscene or sexual material without parental consent, use pronoun changes without parental consent, violate student privacy without parental consent, or neglect to report sexual assault or harassment on school property.

The bill as it is currently written puts the protection of parental rights...
in the hands of Department of Education bureaucrats. It is not enough for Congress to leave enforcement to Department of Education bureaucrats or wait for the corrupt Department of Justice to file a lawsuit on a parent’s behalf. I don’t trust the Biden administration to go after woke school administrators that force dangerous ideologies on innocent children.

Parents should have the opportunity to sue these schools. For far too long, the public school system has undermined parental involvement in education decisions. If we want to truly empower parents’ rights, we should give parents the tools to enforce those rights through this amendment, not leave it in the hands of bureaucrats.

Madam Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Good).

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Madam Chair, I support passage of the underlying bill, but I also rise in support of this amendment, which I think would truly empower parents.

Adding a private right of action places the ultimate protection of parental rights back where it belongs, in the hands of parents, not Department of Education bureaucrats.

For too long, the public school system has undermined parental involvement in educational decisions, and parents have been helpless to hold them accountable.

The union-driven COVID policies in our schools served as a wake-up call for many parents, and school boards across the country have tried to stop them from raising their voices in protest.

A private right of action would make a meaningful change to the balance of power so parents can rightfully have a say in what their children are being taught.

This amendment wouldn’t unleash lawsuits against schools. The private right of action is only to be used if the school is not forthcoming with the commonsense provisions of this bill. If the school shares curriculum, teaching materials, and their budget openly, then there is no problem. If the school notifies parents about actions from the school administrator to change a child’s pronouns, then there is no standing under this bill. There is also a limit that the private right of action must be filed within 30 days of the violation.

Parental rights precede government. Our government was created to protect our God-given rights. When government is working to subvert those rights, it is the right of the people to put new guardrails in place to secure our precious liberty.

Guaranteeing a private right of action will ensure public schools are held accountable to the important tenets of this bill.

Madam Chair, I urge support for the amendment.

Mr. CRANE. Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Virginia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Chair, I think the amendment speaks for itself. If a hundred parents show up at a school board meeting, and each demands to be heard for as long as they want to speak, this bill will give them a private right of action in Federal court to enforce their right to speak to the school board.

My local school board limits people to 3 minutes. I think that is a reasonable limitation, but when the amendment to allow reasonable limitations was defeated, you have the bill that they have—everybody has a right, each and every one of the hundred people who show up, no matter how repetitive or irrelevant it may be.

I think people need to know what is in the amendment and can judge it for themselves.

People have said that some parents have been arrested by the police for showing up at the school board. Let me tell you, that can only happen if the police believe that a crime is being committed.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CRANE).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Arizona will be postponed.

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AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MR. DAVIDSON

Mr. DAVIDSON. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Add at the end the following:

TITLE VII—MANDATORY OPEN ENROLLMENT PERIODS

SEC. 701. MANDATORY INTRA- AND INTER-DISTRICT OPEN ENROLLMENT PERIODS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a local educational agency shall not exclude a student from Federal funds under title I or title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6801 et seq.; 20 U.S.C. 6801 et seq.) for a school year unless that exclusion is—

(1) holds an open enrollment period as required under subsection (b); and

(2) complies with the notification requirements under subsection (d).

(b) OPEN ENROLLMENT PERIOD.—To be eligible to receive Federal funds as described in subsection (a), each local educational agency shall, before the beginning of each school year, hold an open enrollment period during which—

(1) a child who is eligible to attend an elementary or secondary school served by the agency may apply to attend any other elementary or secondary school served by the agency, and

(2) a child who is not otherwise eligible to attend an elementary or secondary school served by the agency because that child lives outside the geographic area served by the agency may apply to attend any elementary or secondary school served by the agency.

(c) APPLICATION AND APPROVAL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A parent of a child seeking to enroll in a school pursuant to subsection (b) shall submit an application to the local educational agency in such form, manner, and time, in such manner, and containing such information as the agency may reasonably require.

(2) APPROVAL.—A local educational agency that receives an application under paragraph (1) shall—

(A) give the application full and fair consideration;

(B) approve or disapprove the application within a reasonable time; and

(C) give the parent who submitted the application prompt notice of such approval or disapproval.

(3) DURATION OF APPROVAL.—A child with an application approved under paragraph (2) shall remain eligible to attend the school for which approval was granted for a period of not less than one school year.

(d) NOTICE.—To be eligible to receive Federal funds as described in subsection (a), each local educational agency shall post on a publicly accessible website of the agency or, if the agency does not operate a website, widely disseminate to the public, the following:

(1) Information and procedures for open enrollment under subsection (c), including—

(A) how and where to obtain an application;

(B) when and how parents will be notified when approval or disapproval occurs; and

(C) approval rates based on the most recent data available to the agency.

(3) Information on how long an enrollment approved under subsection (c) remains valid.

(4) Contact information for at least one individual employee of the agency who is responsible for answering questions on the open enrollment process.

(e) ESEA TERMS.—In this section, the terms "child", "elementary school", "local educational agency", "parent", and "secondary school" have the meanings given those terms in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 241, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. DAVIDSON) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. DAVIDSON. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chair, this amendment requires any public school receiving Federal funds under Title I and Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to hold an open enrollment period both for students living inside and outside the school district.

Parents have a right to decide where their child goes to school, and this amendment grants parents this important right to choose the best education for their child, no matter the ZIP Code.
It is important to note this applies only to Federal funds. Some might argue, well, local schools have different tax jurisdictions. This is only for the Federal funds.

School choice is critical to not only the parent’s right to make the best choice for their children, but also to the student who deserves a safe, high-quality education, not indoctrination.

We must provide families with freedom to choose. It is the parents’ duty to make the best choice for their children. Not choice is the ultimate enforcement mechanism for this Parent’s Bill of Rights Act.

My amendment also requires that these schools post an announcement on their website with details about the open enrollment period to ensure parents have all the information needed to make an informed decision, such as an application deadline, the approval rate of applications, and how long the enrollment period will be valid. Again, this gives parents the power and ability to make the most informed decision.

Under this amendment, schools must give every student that applies via the open enrollment process, “a full and fair consideration,” an important detail that every student receives the opportunity to succeed.

Open enrollment and the increase in educational freedom is imperative to the success of our youth. It is a parental right and it is in the best interests of every student to be granted this opportunity.

This amendment provides every single parent with the power to choose.

Madam Chair, I urge support for my amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Virginia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Chair, I think I would prefer that we fixed all of the schools so that all students are provided with an opportunity of a high-quality education and a safe and healthy environment.

All this amendment does is give people the right to scurry around and try to find the best schools. Those that are the best at identifying the best schools may end up there, but frankly, all this is going to do is cause confusion because when word gets around as to which are the best schools, everybody will want to go to that school. Then what?

The majority has offered the amendment in committee to let parents know that if they can work the system, they may get their child into a good school but all the rest end up in a school that is dilapidated, unaccredited, or otherwise undesirable.

We need to work to improve all of the schools, not just figure out a scheme where some can figure out how to get their child into a good school and leave everyone else behind.

Madam Chair, I oppose the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. DAVIDSON).

The Acting CHAIR announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Ohio will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 8 OFFERED BY MR. FITZPATRICK

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 8 printed in House Report 118–112.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment. The text of the amendment is as follows:

Add at the end the following:

TITLE VII—GAO REPORT

SEC. 701. GAO REPORT.

Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Education and the Workforce and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate an assessment of the impact of this Act, and the amendments made by this Act, on—

(1) protecting parents’ rights in the education of their children; and

(2) costs to State educational agencies, local educational agencies, elementary schools, and secondary schools (as such terms are defined in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801)).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 241, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Madam Chair, I rise today in favor of my amendment, designated as amendment No. 8 to H.R. 5, the Parents Bill of Rights Act.

Madam Chair, we have a responsibility to be mindful of the cost and implementation of this bill on our schools, parents, and communities.

My amendment require the GAO to report on the impact of this legislation and provide peace of mind to taxpayers, educators, and families alike.

Our priority must be to set our children up for success. That means giving parents the transparency and voice they deserve in their child’s education.

It also means making the Federal Government answerable to the potential costs of this bill on State and local educational agencies and individual schools throughout our Nation.

We have made a commitment to our constituents to demand more account-ability from their government over the use of their taxpayer dollars, as well as to safeguard a better future for the next generation of Americans. My amendment would guarantee that we keep that promise.

Mr. Chair, I urge the amendment’s adoption, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Chair, I support the amendment because the GAO report will actually expose the legislation for what it is. It is a waste of money, will provide no meaningful rights, and it will adversely affect the education of the children.

Madam Chair, I support the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania will be postponed.

Mr. FOXX. Madam Chair, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. ROACH) having the Chair.

Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK).

Ms. GREENE of Georgia, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5) to ensure the rights of parents are honored and protected in the Nation’s public schools, had come to no resolution thereon.