



April 3rd, 2025  
In Favor of HB5726

My name is Aaliyah (preferred name Alex) Rivera and I am a Youth Leader at ARISE. I am writing to support HB5726 because about 2 months ago, I finished a book— and this book was about a teenaged boy, entering his freshman year of high school, and he is grappling with the effects of losing his best friend to suicide, and his aunt in car crash. He makes friends with two graduating seniors, and throughout the novel, he learns to evaluate his past and how it has affected him, and his relationships with his newfound friends as the school year comes to a close, and he will no longer have his friends with him.

Even before January of this year, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky has been banned in 5 states, and my fear is that it will continue to be banned all throughout the country; and I won't be able to share this novel with my peers.

The sharing of literature and education has always been a very important aspect in my life, and reading has been right there along with it. Even before elementary school, reading has been important to me and my development. Having access to a public library really allowed me to explore my creativity, letting me engage in the vast selection of books, and literature. That freedom helped me form my own perspective on the way words can, and have, changed my view and outlook on how human beings connect and share stories with each other— and have done so for millennia.

I ask that you continue to support HB5726, and continue to encourage and influence legislation to protect our access to authentic, and uncensored literature amongst all Americans, no matter their identity markers.

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