



Apr 3rd, 2025

House Bill HB 5726– “The Freedom to Read Bill”

To the House Committee,

My name is Anthony Iech, and I am a Youth Leader at ARISE. I support Senate Bill S 0238 because at this moment, there are many books in which I have loved, or have been looking forward to, that are at risk of being banned in the upcoming future. Books are a vital form of education, and are important in the growth of the brain. It allows many others to be able to learn different perspectives, along with the ability to be creative. During my years in school, ranging from middle to high school, I have read a few of the upcoming list of banned books. Seventh grade, I read the Hunger Games and spoke of the many different factors that led to me having a clearer lens of what may really be happening in other countries around the world, and how our country differentiated from them. Eighth grade, I read The Giver and thought of how some people may “escape” the reality that was given to them. They change the ways of their own lives, even while going against society and certain laws, in order to achieve a state of meeting all of their crucial needs. In tenth grade, I read the Lord of the Flies and found how governments may be the foundation to how a civilization begins, develops a stable society, and maintains rule to keep order.

It is now, however, that I want to ask about how our government has come to the conclusion of wanting to ban books like these. Those three books in common, The Hunger Games, The Giver, and The Lord of the Flies, all involve a dystopian society, one that is much different from ours. They speak of societies where many have rejected the government, and have formed their own type of ideals for which they believed, and many others have believed, to be humane. Is it that our current government and those in charge are intimidated by the possible outcomes of what may happen if society continues to read these books? The nation’s documents, such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, state that the people of America may have the right to overthrow the government if our rights to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness are to be ended. Our government is meant to be a democracy where the people of the nation are those who are in charge. If most people have disagreed with the banning of these books, why does book banning still exist? Does the U.S. government have a rising fear of the information certain books share? I ask that you continue to support Senate Bill S 0238 as the people of our nation should have the right to read whatever they’d like as if it was a form of the first amendment, the Freedom of Speech, and to actively be informed of our nation’s conditions and history.

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