

afterward, honorably served in the U.S. Navy during World War II.

After the war, in 1946, he began his 31-year service to the Las Vegas community as part of the police department, when the town was still segregated and there was not even a police academy for him to learn.

He was undeterred, however, and taught himself how to file reports that would stand up in court. He found books about Nevada law so he could make good arrests, and he shared that knowledge with his colleagues to raise the standards of the entire Las Vegas police force.

While he battled discrimination and was passed over for promotions, he never let that deter him from his goal. He rose to the highest rank and served as the second highest senior officer in the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department.

My condolences to his wife, Mag-nolia, to the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, and to the entire family.

Detective Moody, may you rest in peace.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5, PARENTS BILL OF RIGHTS ACT

Mrs. HOUCHIN. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 241 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 241

Resolved, That at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5) to ensure the rights of parents are honored and protected in the Nation's public schools. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed two hours equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce or their respective designees. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Education and the Workforce now printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-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. All points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. No amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally 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 in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the amendment in the nature of a substitute made in order as original text. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOST). The gentlewoman from Indiana is recognized for 1 hour.

Mrs. HOUCHIN. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCANLON), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume.

During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Last night, the Rules Committee met and reported out a rule, House Resolution 241, providing for consideration of H.R. 5.

The Parents Bill of Rights is to be considered under a structured rule with 2 hours of debate, equally divided and controlled by the Chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, or their designees, and provides for one motion to recommit.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this rule and in support of the underlying legislation. The Parents Bill of Rights would secure a fundamental right parents should always be guaranteed: their right to make informed decisions about their children.

As my first time managing a floor debate, I couldn't think of a better bill to focus on. Our families in Indiana and across the country deserve debate on H.R. 5, and we plan to deliver.

As a mother of three children in school, I know how important it is for parents to know what is happening in the classroom. Unfortunately, this bill is necessary because school districts across the country have failed to deliver basic transparency.

That became painfully obvious to parents during the pandemic. Our living rooms became classrooms. Parents came to realize exactly what their children's days looked like.

Many parents were surprised and disappointed by what they were learning about their children's educational experiences.

Like many of my colleagues, I prefer that most decisions regarding education be made at the State and local level, and this bill does not change that.

The actions over the past few years have compelled us to stand up and to act. There has been example after example of this becoming a bigger problem.

In one example, a father from Virginia had to learn his daughter was as-

saulted in the high school bathroom from his child, not the school.

Stories like this one shouldn't become the new normal.

As I said in the Rules Committee during the hearing about the bill just last night: "Sending a child to public school does not terminate parental rights at the door."

I worked in child services. I have cared for children in foster care. When foster parents are caring for their children who are in the custody of the State, they can't give those kids a haircut without getting permission from the child's biological parents. Shouldn't the same rules apply to the students' safety and well-being in our schools?

Yet, parents are left pleading. They are left to plead for information; to plead for the safety of their kids in public restrooms; to plead for the quality of their kids' education; and to plead for anyone who would listen to help restore their parental rights.

This bill would restore transparency, consultation, and notification requirements to existing law. In doing so, it would give parents the right to obtain critical information more easily from school administrators, boards, and teachers to make informed decisions regarding their children's education.

The bottom line: It gives power back to parents.

As the Republican Education and the Workforce Committee members have said, the Parents Bill of Rights contains five basic principles: That parents have the right to know what their children are being taught; that parents have the right to be heard; that parents have the right to see the school budget; that parents have the right to protect their children's privacy; and that parents have a right to keep their children safe.

Now, these goals are hard to fight against, but we have heard critics say this bill is somehow politicizing education or that bureaucrats know better than parents or that we are encouraging the banning of books.

Let me be clear. Nothing in this bill has anything to do with banning books or even that parent engagement is somehow a better model than parental rights. That is simply not true.

Instead, this bill provides an opportunity to ensure our kids are prepared to contribute to this great country of ours. It aims to strengthen parent-teacher partnerships where they exist and close information gaps where parent-teacher partnerships could be improved.

While there are many challenges in our schools, one we should all be able to agree on tackling is that administrators, educators, and parents should be on the same page. The first step in achieving that goal is improving our parents' access to information about their kids' experiences.

One example of this is an amendment I was able to offer during the markup a few weeks ago. The amendment required notification of parents when a

student isn't reading at grade-level proficiency by the end of the third grade. Our child literacy rates are falling behind, and the more parents know, the more they can help, the better.

In the end, by passing the Parents Bill of Rights, we are one step closer to what everyone wants, providing our students with the best learning experience inside and outside of the classroom and giving parents a proper say in their children's future.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this rule, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1230

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Indiana for yielding the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I think we can all agree that public education plays a central role in our democracy, helping to ensure the Jeffersonian ideal of having an informed electorate to participate in the governance of our country. I think we can also agree that it is vitally important that parents, as their children's primary caregivers, play an active role in their kids' education in our public schools.

That is why governance of our public schools is entrusted to local boards of education, where most school board members are, in fact, parents and are directly responsible to the communities they serve.

In our fast-paced and online world, the glue that so often holds our communities together is our neighborhood schools, the parent-teacher and home and school organizations that support them, and the extracurricular athletics and activities that we all gather at.

That is why it is so disappointing that the Republican majority has chosen to bring to the floor a bill that undermines those community values and does nothing to address the real issues facing America's schools today.

Contrary to its title, this bill does not give parents any more rights than they already have. Even the conservative Cato Institute has criticized this bill for doing nothing to actually empower parents. In fact, many of the so-called rights this bill claims to establish, like parents' ability to meet with their child's teachers, testify at school board meetings, examine school budgets, or protect their children's privacy, are already enshrined in law and are things school districts nationwide already do and in which parents consistently participate in.

What this bill does do is promote efforts to inject divisive D.C. politics and culture wars into our neighborhood schools and create burdensome new Federal mandates for those schools, dictating to our local communities and our local taxpayers how and when to perform certain tasks.

To add insult to injury, this bill doesn't offer any funding to meet these new Federal mandates or propose re-

sources that would actually help students and families or support our public schools, many of which are already struggling to make ends meet under inequitable funding formulas.

This bill would force schools to invest already scarce time and resources toward onerous compliance requirements and administrative costs and away from crucial measures that actually improve student outcomes, all with no additional money and with no discernible benefit to our children.

Ultimately, this bill is an act of Federal overreach that would hinder students' ability to learn and undermine the important work that educators, librarians, and other school professionals do every day. It would undermine the valuable relationships among parents and between parents, students, and teachers, relationships that are built on trust and shared goals.

The truth is that the primary concerns for too many teachers and parents are to make sure that their children have enough to eat, a bed to sleep in at night, and can get to and from school safely. This bill does not address those critical needs or, for that matter, anything else that promotes student success and well-being.

What this bill does is open the door to allowing a noisy minority to dictate what all students can and cannot read or learn, and that hurts both our kids and our communities.

We have already seen in Florida and other States that have passed versions of this bill that the provisions buried in this legislation have allowed right-wing bullies to ban books, gut history lessons, and marginalize some of our communities.

The beauty of our public schools is that they help our children become critical thinkers and functional adults by meeting and learning about the diversity of people, viewpoints, and experiences in the world around them.

Allowing some parents to dictate their worldview to all parents and students in our public schools does a disservice to our schools, our children, and our communities, particularly when, as has been so often the case recently, those efforts have sought to marginalize people of color and the LGBTQ community.

Perhaps my Republican colleagues are discounting the opportunities for parental engagement that are already baked into our public education system because the views they are pushing, to ban books and whitewash history, are not accepted by the overwhelming majority of Americans.

I know how much children benefit when parents and teachers work together to help them reach their full potential. I know this from experience. I spent a decade providing training and representation for parents and students in the public school system. I spent two decades, while my children attended public schools, as a home and school parent, a classroom volunteer, and, like my father and sister before

me, a school board member to help not only my kids but all the kids in our district to succeed.

I often think that school boards are one of the purest forms of local representative democracy. Unpaid members from the community—most of them, like myself, parents—spend endless hours working together with school administrators, educators, and parents, all united by a common goal to do what is best for all of our children.

Over the years, I had countless conversations with involved parents and constituents in grocery stores, at school concerts, on soccer fields, and at formal board meetings about how our schools could best serve our children and taxpayers, where we could do better, and where our options were limited, usually by financial constraints.

Those discussions were sometimes emotional or passionate, and people didn't always agree, but everyone respected our democratic processes and the boundaries of protected speech as we sought to reach the best possible solutions for our community.

Those conversations and deliberations also reflected a core principle of our civil society, one that is important to remember as we struggle to reduce the hyperpartisanship and lack of civility in our politics and to model good behavior for our children. That is the principle of cooperation and compromise, that having the loudest voice or being a bully doesn't mean that you always get to win.

This bill, H.R. 5, does not help parents, educators, and school districts to work together more effectively. Instead, this bill pits parents against each other and against teachers in a way that creates more chaos and community discord. That hurts students and families, disregards talented educators, undermines public schools, and detracts from what should be our ultimate goal, providing the best possible public education for America's children.

Our national motto is "e pluribus unum," "out of many, one," not "my way or the highway." We form a stronger and more perfect community when we bring our diverse talents and strengths together, and this bill undermines that goal.

I now represent a congressional district with 21 school districts in it, including one of the largest in the country, and I talk to a lot of parents in my community.

Parents in my district want to talk about how to help our kids succeed. They want to talk about hiring enough teachers, librarians, and guidance counselors. They want to talk about fixing crumbling school buildings and preparing our children for the jobs and challenges of the 21st century.

They want schools in our communities that serve the healthy food kids need to learn and grow, offer mental health resources, and teach the skills

that every American needs to be engaged and informed citizens and taxpayers to ensure our long-lasting democracy.

Overwhelmingly, these parents are appalled that bills like H.R. 5 threaten to open the floodgates to book bans, more restrictions on what can be said in the classroom, and attempts to rewrite history and censor facts, all at the expense of our students.

While it sounds benign, this bill will be used to eliminate classroom conversations about racism in the American story or portrayals of LGBTQ people in books, all while refusing to deliver on what parents are actually asking for to keep their children safe, the kind of policies that House Democrats are bringing to the table to keep children safe from dangerous toxins like asbestos and lead that are still prevalent in too many schools and to keep children safe from gun violence, now the leading cause of death for American children.

We need commonsense gun safety laws that keep weapons out of classrooms and out of the hands of children so parents aren't scared that one day they will send their kids to school and they will never come home.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle often talk about being the party of small government and local control. They condemn the intrusion of the Federal Government into local affairs, but this legislation is nothing more than an attempt to nationalize our education system and mandate a one-size-fits-all approach across the country, assuming that the size that fits is a rightwing straitjacket.

Even the conservative Cato Institute has said that H.R. 5 suffers from a fundamental flaw: It is not constitutional.

We should give young people the resources they need to learn and grow, not stifle their ideas, threaten their civil rights, censor their classrooms and teachers, or take books off library shelves. We should not promote chaos and bullying in our communities.

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. HOUCHIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

Mrs. HOUCHIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN).

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative HOUCHIN for bringing this important bill to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I rise and fully support H.R. 5. Folks, this bill could be called the parents bill of rights transparency bill because that is all it is, transparent.

As I look to the balcony, I see a lot of young people, middle-aged people, people with children and maybe grand-

children. Nowhere in this bill is it banning any books. Nowhere.

As my good friend from Texas yesterday pointed out during rules debate, my friends on the other side of the aisle had one book. I see they have a stack of books now. Let me see if they will give you an example of books that you can pull up on the internet that are taught in public schools all over the country.

Let me see if they are going to recognize the book "Beyond Magenta." It documents stories on LGBTQ youth. It has very sexually explicit passages: I was sexually active from the time I was 6.

I won't go on to say the other things that they have. Are you going to highlight these books?

Another book, "This Book Is Gay," discusses orgies and kinky sex acts. Are you going to highlight that?

"Gender Queer" is a novel, and it had a debate in the libraries. It had explicit images of oral sex. Are you going to highlight that book?

Let's take "Juliet Takes a Breath." This book discusses a woman's journey coming out as a lesbian and contains graphic descriptions of sexual encounters.

Folks, I could go on and on. It lists I don't know how many different books.

Mr. Speaker, I ask parents if this is something they want their children to read? Is this something that encourages academics and allows that child to compete in the 21st century? Is this a book that promotes what their child needs to know?

It is sad that this bill is even needed, but it is estimated that between kindergarten and the 12th grade, a student will spend over 15,000 hours at school. That is 15,000 hours when parents are trusting other people to do what is in the best interest of their child.

It is good that America's parents are taking a stand now. They are pushing back on these kinds of books that I don't think they are going to mention.

I have 4 children and 17 grandchildren. We got a notice a week ago where the parents are upset because the school is allowing boys to go into—The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mrs. HOUCHIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from South Carolina.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, bottom line: The school was allowing males to go into female bathrooms. This is intolerable.

This bill is needed. It gives parents the control, and it gives parents the right to know what their child is being taught.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the RECORD a letter from the American Library Association opposing H.R. 5, saying that the bill would create a catalyst for more book banning and censorship.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION,

March 16, 2023.

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

Hon. KEVIN MCCARTHY,
Speaker, House of Representatives.

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

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 child'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:

Are unnecessary and unwarranted;
[Would create a catalyst for more book banning and censorship;] and

Would create unfunded federal mandates and regulation where none are needed, at the cost of educating students.

This letter explains each of these concerns below and provides background information about school libraries and an analysis of the bill's school library provisions.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES ARE ESSENTIAL TO EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 88 percent of all public schools had a school library in 2020–21. School libraries and librarians play essential roles in promoting educational achievement, including by fostering a love of reading which encourages students' development of key literacy skills. School libraries offer a variety of age-appropriate materials for voluntary reading, which is central to helping students discover the joy of reading. School library collections are typically overseen by school librarians who hold a Master's in Library Science or comparable degree from an ALA-accredited graduate program, and who in many states are required to hold a state certification. Library collections are developed in accordance with professional standards, the school's collection development and reconsideration policies, and the requirements of applicable law, including the U.S. Constitution.

ANALYSIS OF H.R. 5'S SCHOOL LIBRARY PROVISIONS

The following provisions, as contained in Rules Committee Print 118-2, would impose new federal requirements on local school libraries.

Section 104 would require local educational agencies that receive funding under federal Education Department programs to notify parents that they have the right to a "list of the books and other reading materials contained in the library of their child's school" and to "inspect such books or other reading materials," and to provide parents with such list and opportunity to inspect such materials at the beginning of each school year.

Section 202 would require local educational agencies that receive funding under federal Education Department programs to make available for inspection by parents "any books or other reading materials made available to students in such school or through the school library of such school," and to adopt a policy providing for such inspection upon the request of the parent.

Section 202 also contains reporting provisions, which would require:

Local educational agencies that receive funding under federal Education Department

programs to annually “report to the State educational agency any enforcement actions or investigations carried out for the preceding school year to ensure compliance with this section” and to “publish such information on its website;”

State educational agencies, in turn, to annually report information received from local educational agencies to the federal Education Department, as well as “a description of the enforcement actions the State educational agency took to ensure parents’ rights were protected;” and

The federal Secretary of Education to annually report information received from states to Congress, along with “a description of the enforcement actions taken by the Secretary [. . .] to ensure full compliance.”

Finally, Section 202 directs the Secretary to “take such action as the Secretary determines appropriate to enforce this section,” including the authority to terminate federal funding “if the Secretary determines that there has been a failure to comply with such section, and compliance with such section cannot be secured by voluntary means.”

The bill would not provide funding to implement these requirements.

THE BILL’S SCHOOL LIBRARY PROVISIONS ARE UNNECESSARY AND UNWARRANTED

The bill’s school library 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 catalog or 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 and students. School librarians welcome the opportunity to engage with parents in support of the student’s education and fostering a love of reading. That is precisely why school libraries exist, and why school librarians have chosen their profession.

Furthermore, these provisions are unwarranted. 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 isn’t interested 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 Education Department 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 a small minority who seek 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 demands to censor 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 ban-

ning of children’s books regarding the contributions to society by individuals like Condoleezza Rice, Rosa Parks, and Malala Yousafzai. 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

As described above, the bill’s requirements for school libraries are essentially duplicative of standard local practice. Nonetheless, by imposing new federal regulation on local schools, the bill would create new paperwork requirements, compliance burdens, and administrative costs, including for rural and small schools that can least afford them. These unfunded mandates will 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 should be used to pay for books, librarians, and 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 goal. 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 invitations to censorship.

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

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

ALAN S. INOUE, PH.D.,
Senior Director, Public
Policy & Govern-
ment Relations and
Interim Associate
Executive Director,
American Library
Association.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Rules.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, let me get something straight here: Republicans keep saying, as they just did, that nothing in this bill has anything to do with banning books. We keep hearing it over and over and over. We have heard the same thing in State after State as Republicans have passed bills like this.

□ 1245

Now, we have over 1,600 books—and more every month—pulled from the

shelves. They are banned. Democrats put forward amendments to prevent politicians from banning books. They all voted “no.” Democrats put forward six amendments to prevent censorship. They all voted “no.” Now they are trying to pretend like they have no idea why we would be concerned about book bans. Give me a break.

I am a parent. My wife, Lisa, and I have gone to countless parent-teacher conferences when our kids were in public school. Both of my sisters are public school teachers. I know how hard they work to involve parents in their kids’ education. Don’t lecture us. We are parents. We know what this is about. It is about banning books.

This bill is going to be weaponized by far right groups and used to threaten schools with legal action if they don’t pull books off the shelves. It is going to force teachers to decide between staying silent and teaching something that certain politicians in their State don’t like. It is already happening, for God’s sake.

Ask the teacher in Iowa who was told that they cannot teach that slavery was wrong.

Ask the teacher in Texas who was told that they have to teach the opposite perspective on the Holocaust.

Ask the teacher in Florida who was fired for exposing a book-banning spree at the hands of Ron DeSantis that would make the Chinese Communist Party blush.

I have a few books that Republicans want to ban—too many to go through now, but let me recite a few. “The Life of Rosa Parks.” “Who was Sojourner Truth?” “Biography of Nelson Mandela.” “The Story of Harvey Milk.”

Now, do you notice any pattern here? They want to ban books about Black and Brown people, and they want to ban books about LGBTQI+ people. It is sick. It is hateful. What is wrong with them, Mr. Speaker?

If you don’t like a book, don’t let your kid read it. But you don’t get to tell the rest of us parents what our kids should be allowed to read. Talk to your kids’ teachers. Run for school board. Don’t take away money from schools that fall on the wrong side of the MAGA culture wars.

We gave Republicans dozens of chances to amend this bill and make it better to address the actual issues that our schools face. They voted “no” on all of them. Get this, they voted “no” on getting lead pipes out of schools. They voted “no” on that. They care more about getting Rosa Parks out of our schools than lead pipes. I think that says it all.

Never in my life did I think I would see such a reprehensible, disgraceful bill come to the floor. We should trust parents and teachers and students to think for themselves without having toxic MAGA culture wars shoved down their throats by Republicans in Congress.

Vote “no” on this awful rule and on this awful bill.

Mrs. HOUCHIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY).

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, let's just make sure the American people know the truth. Parents have the right to know what their children are being taught. Parents have the right to be heard. Parents have the right to see the school budget and spending. Parents have the right to protect their child's privacy. Parents have the right to keep their children safe.

That is what my Democratic colleagues are objecting to. Notice how they are objecting. Notice what they are trying to do. It is a page as old as time in the Democratic playbook—fearmongering, racial division, peddling the lies of hatred, saying that somehow the legislation that would empower parents and give parents the right to know what their child is being educated with, know what they are being told, that somehow that is going to lead to banning of books.

What they are afraid of is they are afraid of a parent being able to come in, armed with the information of what is being taught to their children, armed with what is in the library, and holding school boards accountable, holding their educators accountable. That is precisely what my Democratic colleagues do not want to occur.

They are afraid of the Sunshine going into the classroom because they know that after COVID the veil has been lifted on a corrupted education system that has for too long been indoctrinating our children with racial division and hatred. Parents are now awakened. They have seen what is occurring behind the veil because the veil was lifted.

My colleagues go around peddling the fears of banned books, completely inaccurately trying to claim that books were banned in Duval County that weren't banned, books that were either not ordered—when, in fact, there are on average 13 books about Rosa Parks in every elementary school in Duval County. That is the truth. Nobody wants to pull books about Rosa Parks. Nobody wants to pull books about Roberto Clemente.

If there is legislation passed to make sure that we stop the ridiculousness of what books are being put in front of our kids, then people go: Let's pull books and look at it to make sure what is in it, and then they decide to put those books back when they pass muster. That is what my colleagues want to say are being banned.

What they do not want to talk about are the books that my colleagues from South Carolina just talked about. They don't want to talk about "Flamer," a graphic book about young boys performing sexual acts at a summer camp. They don't want to talk about that.

Who does?

A bunch of fringe leftist groups that want to stick that stuff in our schools for our kids to read.

How about "This Book is Gay," a book containing instructions on the ins and outs of gay sex.

This is what we want being put in the schools for our children?

Our Democratic colleagues do not want the American people, the parents, to know this. That is what this is about. My Democratic colleagues do not want parents to know that information. They don't. They have a bill in front of them that literally gives parents the right to know that and they are opposing it and opposing it with force.

To my colleagues who say: Well, this is sticking the Federal Government into the tent of local government, I say to them: Well, welcome to the club of actually being concerned about Federal Government overreach. I agree.

So I hope they will support my amendment then that would strike all the language and block grant the dollars to the States. They don't want to do that, ladies and gentlemen, because they want to meddle. They just want to meddle the way they want to.

They don't want to have a clean elimination of the Department of Education. I support my colleague THOMAS MASSIE's bill to do that. My Democratic colleagues do not.

My Democratic colleagues will not support a block grant to States because they want to meddle. They want to interfere. They just don't want parents to know the truth. That is a dirty little secret.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take a minute—or not even a minute—to correct a couple statements that were made.

First of all, I include in the RECORD an article from Jax Today titled: "Duval Schools to keep 73 'diverse, inclusive' books out of classrooms."

[From Jax Today, Dec. 22, 2022]

DUVAL SCHOOLS TO KEEP 73 'DIVERSE, INCLUSIVE' BOOKS OUT OF CLASSROOMS
(By Claire Heddles)

Dozens of books the Duval County school district ordered in the summer of 2021 will never hit classroom shelves. That's the result of an ongoing review after the district pulled almost 200 books this spring while the Florida Legislature passed limits on what teachers can say about race, gender and sexual orientation in classrooms and set new rules for purchasing classroom materials.

After a 10-month process—delayed by staffing shortages, according to the district—47 titles are being returned to the distributor. Twenty-six others will remain in storage, awaiting further state guidance.

Among the rejected titles are a book about Martin Luther King Jr. intended for fourth graders; a biography of Rosa Parks for second grade classrooms; a first grade Berenstain Bears book about God; and multiple titles including LGBTQ+ characters and families. District staffers are sending the rejected books back to the distributor, Perfection Learning, for exchange.

The rest of the 179 books that had been held for review were determined to meet "statutory guidelines and are useful toward our reading goals," and were distributed to classrooms in October, a district representative tells Jacksonville Today in an email.

All of the books are from the Essential Voices Classroom Libraries collection, which

the distributor says are meant to engage students in "independent reading through these diverse, inclusive" stories.

Explore the full list of books that were pulled for review:

'BANNED BOOKS'

In September, PEN America, an organization advocating for free speech, released a tally of books they said were banned across the country, including more than 550 in Florida, the second-most of any state. Only Texas banned more.

The list included the Essential Voices books the district withheld from classrooms. Duval Schools contested the characterization as a book ban because none of the books was challenged by the public—the district pulled them before they ever went on shelves.

Ami Polonsky is the author of one of the recently rejected books, Gracefully Grayson, a transgender coming-of-age novel intended for fifth grade classrooms. A teacher herself, Polonsky believes books like hers are blocked to appease a small subset of parents.

"Books can save kids' lives, and to know this, but still refuse to take them out of storage is nonsensical, it's immoral. A parenting perspective cannot outweigh a national mental health crisis among trans children," Polonsky told the School Board this month. "Books that are ordered with the best of intentions gather dust, and the LGBTQ children continue to receive the message that their existence is controversial."

Polonsky and two other authors came to Jacksonville to address the Duval School Board in early December at the urging of national free speech organizations PEN America, We Need Diverse Books and Freedom to Read. At the time, the district had not yet publicly released the list of 106 books it now says were distributed to classrooms in October.

NEW STATE LAWS

Another of the authors, Linda Sue Park, wrote a book about South Sudanese sisters on a two-hour walk to get water for their family called Nya's Long Walk. Her book was among the 179 titles initially pulled, but it was since distributed to kindergarten classrooms, according to the district.

Park was in Jacksonville advocating for all the books in the Essential Voices collection, many of which are written by authors of color with main characters of color.

"You never know what book is going to do it for them, what book is going to hit them, and that's why more choice, more access, more variety is so important," she said.

Duval decided to pull the books for review as it grappled with limited state guidance for how to implement at least three new Florida laws that restricted school curricula: HB 1467, HB 7 and HB 1557.

HB 1467, sponsored by Rep. Sam Garrison, R-Fleming Island, requires school districts to maintain a list of library materials and make it easier for the public to contest school books. Districts are also required to have a state-certified media specialist sign off on new materials.

Starting in January 2023, school librarians and media specialists will have to complete an online training program developed by the state Department of Education. In an email this week, a Duval Schools spokesperson said the remaining 26 Essential Voices book reviews will be the first use of this training.

"Once that training [is] released, the district will use this as a great opportunity to go through this process applying the required training," the spokesperson wrote.

Another new law, HB 7, which Gov. Ron DeSantis nicknamed the Stop WOKE Act, limited how teachers can talk about race and

racism and in the classroom. A federal judge blocked the law from taking effect last month, calling it “positively dystopian.” The DeSantis administration is appealing the ruling in federal court.

Though HB 7 is not currently in effect, Duval Schools blocked multiple books that deal with race and history, including a Memphis, Martin, and the Mountaintop by Alice Faye Duncan, about Martin Luther King Jr. and the 1968 sanitation strike; Other Words for Home by Jasmine Warga, about a 12-year-old Syrian refugee in the U.S.; and Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family’s Fight for Desegregation by Duncan Tonatiuh, a children’s book about the fight to end segregation in California schools seven years before Brown v. Board of Education—the Supreme Court decision that found school segregation unconstitutional.

A third new law, HB 1557, or Parental Rights in Education, bans instruction about sexual orientation and gender identity in first through third grade, “or in a manner that is not age-appropriate” in older grades. Rather than define “age appropriate,” the law that critics call “Don’t Say Gay” allows parents to sue districts if they believe something is not.

Polonsky’s rejected book, Gracefully Grayson, was intended for fifth graders. Other books meant for older grade levels with LGBTQ+ stories are also being sent back, including the fourth grade book, Rainbow Revolutionaries: Fifty LGBTQ+ People Who Made History, by Sarah Prager, and The Stonewall Riots: Coming Out in the Street, by Gayle E. Pitman for fifth graders.

Also in response to HB 1557, the Duval school district dramatically shrank its LGBTQ+ support guide, removed rainbow stickers and posters that supported LGBTQ students from classrooms and took down a 12-minute anti-bullying video that taught middle and high school students how to support their gay and transgender peers.

Ellen Oh, author and CEO of the national nonprofit We Need Diverse Books, says Duval’s actions are particularly concerning because the decisions were made before any parent complained about the books.

“It’s the secretive, the silent censoring part of it that is so troublesome to us,” Oh said ahead of the Dec. 6 School Board meeting. “Books that have been banned have been done publicly. People have challenged books. In this case, these books were pulled because of fear. We can’t live in a society like that.”

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, also, it is not the first time my colleague mentioned the book “Flamer,” which he described as a graphic book about a child at summer camp. In fact, it is a graphic novel, which is kind of a trend that he may not be familiar with.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA).

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, all of us can agree that the most precious gift God can give us is our children. I am a parent of four children—four children—who all attended public education, K-12. As a parent, I was active and participated in the local school board meetings, teacher-parent conferences, and I was involved with the local PTA because it was my responsibility to know what was going on in my children’s life, especially educational life.

All of us here as Americans, regardless of party affiliation, can agree that protecting our children is one of our most important responsibilities here in

Congress. I agree with my colleagues across the aisle that we need to protect all students, especially, I would say, undocumented students, some of the most vulnerable students in our society.

Last night, I introduced an amendment that would bar any local educational agency, State agency, elementary school, or secondary school from requesting or disclosing a student’s immigration status. Schools, I would say, are the one place in our society that students should feel safe. My amendment would advance this principle. It would say that our students are safe in their schools.

Mr. Speaker, if my colleagues across the aisle would have voted for my amendment last night, then they would have voted for safety for all of our students in school. Yet, they didn’t do that. By failing to vote for my amendment, they left our most vulnerable students hanging.

Mrs. HOUCHIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. ALFORD).

Mr. ALFORD. Mr. Speaker, how dare they. How dare they conflate the names of two great people: Nelson Mandela and Rosa Parks—books about these heroes—and conflate them about books about sexual promiscuity of our children. How dare they.

I am starting to see in my short time here in the U.S. Congress how this game is played. It is a conflate and confuse and baffle the American people.

We are here to set the record straight.

Mr. Speaker, if one good thing came out of COVID, when our kids were forced to stay home, it is that parents saw exactly what they were learning and what they were being taught. The parents didn’t like it. The parents raised their voices. And because of that, they were condemned as domestic terrorists. That was wrong, Mr. Speaker. That was just plain wrong.

As a father myself, I understand. I understand that our children are the most important things in our lives. It is our job to put them in a position to have a better life than we did. Raising and rearing children to be smart, capable, contributing members of society should be our number one objective. Of course, we all know this starts at home. Make no mistake, it does continue at our schools and in our classrooms.

Schools are where our children spend the majority of their childhood, shaping the ideas, building the relationships, building the friendships they will have for a lifetime. This is exactly why parents deserve a seat at the table, and this legislation provides this seat.

Parents have a right to know what is being taught. They have a right to be heard. They have a right to see how a school is spending their taxpayer dollars. Most importantly, they have a right to protect their children’s privacy.

When my Republican colleagues and I won back this Chamber, we swore—we swore to the voters and constituents that we were going to defend these rights. The Parents Bill of Rights isn’t the only step, but it is a great first step.

This legislation ensures curriculum information, books, reading material, and learning standards are made public to parents. Parents will now have an open line of communication with teachers and school board officials. They will not be condemned as terrorists.

Folks, this is common sense. To my good friends on the other side of the aisle, this really shouldn’t be a debate.

Then again, I never thought weeks ago that I would have to stand here and condemn socialism that they voted for.

I never thought I would have to stand here and defend the rights of a baby that survived abortion, and yet we had to do that. I thought that was common sense as well, and I was wrong.

Mr. Speaker, this is not about changing history, this is about preserving our future as a Nation. This is not about banning books. This is about promoting transparency.

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It is our job and it is our responsibility to protect our children from the evils being taught in some classrooms across the country—not all.

I am proud to be a voice for the parents of Missouri, for our district, and for parents across this great land. I am here to tell you, Mr. Speaker, it is time to take a stand. It is time to take a stand for our children. It is time to take a stand for our families. It is time to take a stand for our schools. It is time to take a stand for our great Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on the rules package of this critical piece of legislation.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mrs. HAYES), who is a teacher.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this rule and the underlying bill, H.R. 5.

I look around this Chamber, and I think that arguably I have spent more time in a classroom than anyone in this Chamber. I was a classroom teacher for 15 years. I ran before and after-school programs and summer programs. I led programs for parent engagement. I am also the mother of four children. One of them is a public school student right now. As a teacher and a parent, I know that parent-teacher partnerships are critical to student success.

I know that when a teacher can reach out to parents and discuss challenging curriculum and come up with strategies to support their child, students thrive. I know that when parents can reach out to their child’s teacher and ask questions and voice their concerns, or even more, offer their personal perspectives, students benefit.

But this bill does not do that. It does not promote parent-teacher partnerships. It just creates division in our schools at a time when both parents and teachers need all the help they can get.

I have served on curriculum committees, and it is a requirement that there be a parent representative on those committees. These are the committees that select the books that will be read in classes. Teachers don't arbitrarily do that. I have addressed my local board of education. There was always time for public comment, and parents were encouraged to join. Parents of varying opinions were asked to show up and give their input on what we were doing in our schools.

I have gone to a student's home because their parents could not attend a parent-teacher conference, but I knew that they cared deeply about their child and wanted to have conversations with me. So after school, on my own time, I reached out to connect with those parents. That is what teachers do.

All of this misguided direction is from people on the floor who have very little information about what actually happens on the ground level. During COVID it wasn't that teachers were exposed and parents got an inside look at what happens in classrooms. The best teachers are always inviting parents into the classroom.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from Connecticut.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, in our 16-hour markup, committee Democrats offered strategies for parent engagement. We offered amendments to provide videoconferences so parents could be involved, and we offered legislation to say that kids should have healthy meals in school so that they would be ready to learn. Every single one of them was rejected.

This politics over parents legislation creates unnecessary reporting requirements in our schools and diverts resources.

I am a parent, and this bill actually removes my rights as a parent at the local level and places them in the hands of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to vote "no" on this bill and listen to what parents are saying. They are saying that they want diverse curriculum, diverse books, teachers who are highly qualified and prepared, and for all students, not just some, but all.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman is no longer recognized.

Mrs. HOUCHIN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LANDSMAN).

Mr. LANDSMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the rule and to this very controversial and very dangerous bill, H.R. 5.

I am a former teacher. I am a parent. My wife and I have two children right now in public schools. This is the life we lead. This is our reality right now.

I can tell you that I offered several amendments because I know what I am talking about. One of the amendments was to protect our schools, our teachers, and our parents from unnecessary, awful, and very expensive litigation. That is what this is going to do. This is going to drown our school districts, our schools, our teachers, and maybe our parents in lawsuit after lawsuit after lawsuit.

I offered amendments because everyone in my district believes in local control. One amendment just said: Hey, if you are a believer in local control, then allow school districts to opt out of this very dangerous bill. That is a local control issue. That amendment and the other amendment was not ruled in order so there will be no vote on it.

I believe that this government that they are proposing has become too big for most Americans. It is too intrusive. They are banning books. You can't say this, you can't say that. They are in doctors' offices, and they are in classrooms. They are going too far and trampling on our freedoms.

If they want to help, then invest in preschool, invest in childcare, invest in prenatal care, invest in stable housing, invest in afterschool programs, and invest in all kinds of things that are going to help children and parents.

Stop telling us what to do with our lives and with our children.

Mrs. HOUCHIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY).

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Indiana for the time.

Mr. Speaker, again, the facts are completely irrelevant to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle—completely irrelevant.

Introduced in the RECORD a little while ago was a story from December, again, trying to perpetuate this myth about book banning. Again, the context here matters that we are talking about legislation in this body to just ensure that parents know what is in the libraries and what is in the curriculum. It does nothing more.

Yet, that is the great offense. They are trying to perpetuate that myth about Federal perpetuation of so-called book banning. Let me be clear. Yes. Some local jurisdictions are removing certain books—absolutely, and God bless them for it—books about explicit sex acts. Let that hang out over the Chamber.

No, I do not want America's children to have to be subjected to that kind of terrible indoctrination in the schools—absolutely not—and parents should be empowered to stop it. Instead, they want to perpetuate this myth.

The facts are true.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to include in the RECORD an article titled: "Facts about library books in Duval County Public Schools."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

[Feb. 17, 2023]

FACTS ABOUT LIBRARY BOOKS IN DUVAL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(By Tracy Pierce and Lauren Ricks)

Feb. 17, 2023—Books about Roberto Clemente and Hank Aaron from the Essential Voices collection are among approximately 10,000 books that have been reviewed and approved through the new state-required book review process.

This review process and the status of library books were the subject of conversation and misinformation that appeared in media and social media over the last few weeks.

Much of this misinformation was due to two separate but interdependent topics:

1. The purchase of almost 1,300 books from Perfection Learning (including almost 180 books from their Essential Voices Collection)
2. The current effort to review all media center and classroom library books, which is now required under state law.

This Team Duval News article will address both topics comprehensively to help clarify the misinformation that has spread.

TOPIC ONE: BOOKS FROM PERFECTION LEARNING

1. The district purchased almost 1,300 titles in 2021. When we received that order, more than 1,100 titles went directly to the classrooms.

2. The order included almost 180 book titles from the Essential Voices collection, which we purchased to increase diversity of writers, characters, topics, and viewpoints in our classroom libraries.

3. When we received those books, we quickly became aware that the delivery included titles we did not order. We collected those books from schools and held them in district storage until our media specialists and others could review them. (Note: We have two media specialists at the district level, and their primary responsibility is to support school instruction).

4. When we reviewed the books, we sent 105 titles from this diverse collection to classrooms last fall.

5. We sent 47 book titles back to Perfection Learning. Fourteen of these were because we didn't order them. Others returned were titles that we ordered but upon review, we determined they would not comply with new legislation or were not appropriate for elementary aged children.

6. We held 27 titles as we awaited state guidance to determine the appropriate grade levels and placement (classroom library or media center) for these books.

7. Media specialists received training from the Florida Department of Education in January 2023 after returning from winter break.

8. As of February 13, 2023, all 27 of those titles have been reviewed and approved for designated grade levels, including the books about Roberto Clemente and Hank Aaron.

TOPIC TWO: STATE-REQUIRED REVIEW OF CLASSROOM LIBRARIES

1. State law now requires that every book in our classroom libraries and school media centers be reviewed by certified media specialists.

2. Since the law passed, our small team of certified media specialists (about 54 across all schools and the district) have taken on the task of reviewing more than 1.6 million titles.

3. Based on state training on multiple laws dealing with gender and racial ideology in books, we are reviewing for three things:

a. Material which could be considered pornographic is not allowed. State trainers reminded our team throughout their presentation that this is punishable as a third-degree felony and that reviewers should “err on the side of caution.”

b. Material which could be considered instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity is expressly forbidden in state law for students in grades K–3.

c. Material that could violate Florida Statute 1006.31(2)(d) and 1003.42(3) which, among other requirements, includes material that might describe a person or people as “inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously, solely by virtue of his or her race or sex.”

(Sidenote on item c. above: Since Dr. Greene arrived in 2018, the district has invested more than \$1 million in classroom books from diverse authors and about diverse groups of people. Our goal was—and continues to be—to put books in the hands of children in which they can see themselves and learn from a broad array of perspectives. What that now means is that we have thousands of titles that we must review to ensure our teachers do not unintentionally violate Florida Statutes.)

4. We did direct teachers to temporarily reduce their classroom library collections to titles that were previously approved while waiting for media specialists to curate a more expansive list of approved titles. However, at no time should a classroom have been without reading resources. At all times, students should have had access to state approved books, already approved civics literacy books, Benchmark Advance small group books, Reader’s Theatre, and extensive online resources in our curriculum.

5. We did have a small number of principals interpret directions and guidance more intensely, out of an abundance of caution. We have provided additional guidance to those leaders and they have appropriately adjusted their message to teachers. In their defense, the state training also stressed the accountability of the school principal with respect to the books and materials made available to students.

6. We informed principals clearly that media centers should not be closed. However, because we need all certified media specialists to review books, hours of media centers open to students, along with the availability of media specialists to support teachers, has been considerably reduced in some schools.

7. Through this process, we now have almost 10,000 book titles approved for classroom use, including aforementioned books about Roberto Clemente and Hank Aaron. In addition to our 2021 order from Perfection Learning, we already had multiple titles in classroom libraries and media centers about these historic figures, as well as dozens of books about Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks and other icons of the Civil Rights movement.

8. Another new requirement is creating a searchable, online database of all elementary classroom library books for each of our schools so that parents and the public can see all titles available to students. We also have a process and a committee that will review books if they are challenged by a member of the public. All of this is required by law and adds to the effort and time it will take to comply with the law.

Duval County Public Schools will continue this intensive process of reviewing books both to comply with state laws and to ensure teachers and school leaders do not have to worry about jeopardizing their career because a book may be construed to be in violation of Florida law.

As an educational institution, the district’s main goal is this: To help children learn to read.

There are thousands of books we can use to do that, and the district will take the time and make the effort to ensure our students and teachers have access to a diverse, legally compliant set of books.

Mr. ROY. “February 17, 2023—Books about Roberto Clemente and Hank Aaron from the Essential Voices collection are among approximately 10,000 books that have been reviewed and approved through the new State-required book review process.”

The fact is there was a purchase of 1,300 books from Perfection Learning.

“The current effort to review all media center and classroom library books, which is now required under State law,” was reviewed and completed. Those books were not banned.

As I said earlier, there are, on average, 13 to 14 books about Rosa Parks per school in Duval County. Those are the facts. That is the truth. This is a complete misrepresentation designed to scare people when, in fact, we want to empower parents and provide Sunshine for the American people to protect their kids.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. NEGUSE).

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman, my colleague from Pennsylvania, for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, like many of my colleagues here in this Chamber, I am blessed to be a parent. My wife and I are proud parents of a 4-year-old daughter, and we are deeply invested in her education and ensuring that she has the ability to be able to live her dreams. Mr. Speaker, you can imagine my surprise and my disappointment when I learned that the Republicans, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, would be spending our time today on this bill, the politics over parents act.

It is a surprise because for so many years my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have bemoaned the role of the Federal Government in public education.

They have lectured us about local control time and time again, and yet here they stand with a bill to impose a variety of unfunded mandates on school districts across the country and eroding local control, as my colleague from Ohio (Mr. LANDSMAN) articulated.

I am disappointed because these unfunded mandates are so disconnected from the real concerns and fears that parents in my district back home in Colorado are experiencing every day.

Just yesterday the Denver metro area in Colorado was frozen with fear at the news of another incident of gun violence in one of our schools. At East High School, two teachers were wounded, one of them critically. This came on the heels just 2 weeks ago of the tragic death of a 16-year-old student at East High School as a result of gun violence. Our prayers, our thoughts, and our hearts go out to him, his family, his friends, and all the students and the parents who have been impacted in

just the last 14 days as yet another incident of gun violence tears our community apart.

That is what parents in Colorado are concerned about. They are concerned about their students—their children—coming home from school alive. They are concerned about the ability of children to be able to get a quality education and not go hungry, to not be poisoned by lead pipes in some of the dilapidated buildings in rural and urban communities across our country, and about the cost of childcare.

Mr. Speaker, that is what they are concerned about.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, that is what parents and families are concerned about back in Colorado.

So, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose this rule so that we can get on to the business of addressing those concerns I have articulated on behalf of parents and families across our great country.

Mrs. HOUCHIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to make a few comments.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard about things embedded in this legislation. I want to reiterate this is a bill that says that parents have the right to know what their children are being taught, parents have the right to be heard, parents have the right to see the school budget and spending, parents have the right to protect their child’s privacy, and parents have a right to keep their children safe.

We have also heard our colleagues talk about how well school boards work, and for large swaths of the country, I am sure that is true. Just because things work well in some places does not mean they work well in all places. Tell that to Mr. Scott Smith who was arrested at a school board meeting in Loudoun County, Virginia, when he questioned whether the school might be trying to cover up his daughter’s sexual assault by a gender fluid student.

We have heard that this bill pits parents against teachers and against each other. We have heard a lot of those types of comments. The very fact that they characterize this bill as pitting someone against another when I have just stated the facts of what is in the bill should be a red flag.

I sat through a 16-hour markup until the early hours of 2:30 or 3 a.m. in this morning. We did hear dozens of amendments, but what I heard were dozens of chances to empower bureaucrats over empowering parents.

Republicans are proud to stand up for parents on behalf of students.

This is not politics over parents. It is parents over politicians and bureaucrats. We want what parents all across America want: schools to teach reading, writing, arithmetic, and science

with the utmost transparency. Parents want to be involved and informed without having to file 200 freedom of information requests only to be sued by the NEA and the school board, such as Nicole Solis.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time to close.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, there are many issues that we should be dealing with here.

Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to provide for consideration of a resolution that states the House's unyielding responsibility to defend and preserve Social Security and Medicare for generations to come and to affirm that it is the position of the House to reject any cuts to these vital programs.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of the amendment in the RECORD, along with extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, Social Security and Medicare are foundational to our constituents' economic and health security. Republicans have demanded unconscionable cuts to these programs in exchange for raising the debt limit and paying our Nation's bills.

Some of my Republican colleagues have recently changed their rhetoric and now say that they don't want to eviscerate Social Security and Medicare benefits.

Mr. Speaker, I am offering my friends the opportunity to back up their new-found position.

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

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Mrs. HOUCHIN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to the time remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Pennsylvania has 6½ minutes remaining.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Rules Committee, I do feel compelled to comment upon the amendment process that we have with respect to this rule and bill.

I am astounded that, once again, the Republican majority has reported such an imbalanced rule. This rule actually makes in order every single germane Republican amendment submitted before our meeting yesterday, but for Democratic amendments, the rule blocks 28 of the 31 germane amendments offered by the Democrats. That is a 90 percent suppression rate of the ideas submitted by the minority party, all of which were compliant with the rules of the House but have been blocked by Republicans from being debated or voted upon.

The Rules Committee Republicans actually complained about amendment disparities during the Democratic majority, saying, "There is no context in which such a stifling of minority voices is consistent with the designs of this institution or in the best interest of the American people we represent."

That complaint was written after we made in order 30 percent of the amendments submitted by Republicans to structured rule bills. When we do 30 percent, it is a crisis for the institution, but when they do 5 percent this month, it is okay.

Speaker MCCARTHY actually promised both sides "... more openness, more opportunity for ideas to win at the end of the day."

Mr. Speaker, that promise has been broken. This Republican majority knows their bills fail to address real problems, so they continue to block our good ideas from coming to the floor rather than actually debating them. It is wrong, and they need to do better.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to H.R. 5, it does not promote the rights of parents, but it does open the door to censoring teachers and textbooks, threatening the rights of students and their parents, imposing costly burdens on our neighborhood schools that they cannot afford, and infringing on core American values, including freedom of speech and ideas.

It puts rightwing politics over parents and would let a noisy minority push their own agenda and impose their beliefs of what children can or should read or learn onto all parents and students.

Our schools carry out important responsibilities of educating the next generation of Americans, and all children deserve access to an equitable and well-rounded education that equips them for the future.

We should give our schools the resources to help young people feel supported and ready to reach their full potential. We should not create hostile environments for our most marginalized students. We should not pit parents against each other and against educators, and we should not drive wedges between families and their neighborhood schools. I want to do better than that for our kids, and I hope others today want the same.

Mr. Speaker, again, I urge my colleagues to oppose the previous question and the rule.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. HOUCHIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, we made a commitment to America, and delivering for parents is an important part of that promise.

We must empower parents to be in the driver's seat with respect to their children's education. This isn't about banning books or politicizing education.

How parents having a right to be informed about and involved in decisions regarding their own children's aca-

demic experience is being misconstrued by some is lost on me.

Mr. Speaker, we did have a robust committee markup on this bill that I was part of. We were in committee markup, hearing and debating amendments on this bill, from 10:00 in the morning until 2:30 in the morning. In those many amendments, what I heard over and over again was: there is nothing to see here and that this bill is not necessary and that most schools in America are doing just fine.

Well, most schools, Mr. Speaker, are not all schools. Our parents have a fundamental right to know what is happening in the classroom without having to file a public records request to find it. If things are going so well that our colleagues across the aisle believe that this bill is not needed, then they should stand and join Republicans in support of parents across America.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this rule and the underlying bill.

The material previously referred to by Ms. SCANLON is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 241 OFFERED BY
MS. SCANLON OF PENNSYLVANIA

At the end of the resolution, add the following:

SEC. 2. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution, the House shall proceed to the consideration in the House of the resolution (H. Res. 178) affirming the House of Representatives' commitment to protect and strengthen Social Security and Medicare. The resolution shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the resolution and preamble to adoption without intervening motion or demand for division of the question except one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means or their respective designees.

SEC. 3. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H. Res. 178.

Ms. HOUCHIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time and move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question are postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess for a period of less than 15 minutes.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1330

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro