

Letter Template (important info that you'll want to look up and include is in bold)

- Introduce yourself and why you have a stake in this election.
  - o Are you a parent in the district, alumna/us, educator?
- **What is the date of the election? (look this up)**
- Explain who the curriculum ban measures would hurt
  - o LGBTQ students who will be denied reading stories about people like them
  - o Students of color who won't see the struggles their grandparents and great grandparents went through depicted in history lessons
  - o Non-Christian students who won't learn about their family's role in history
  - o White students who won't learn about the ways that America has been unfair and why that still hurts their Black, Asian, Latino, Indigenous, etc. peers today
- The dangers of censorship and monitoring of teachers
  - o Student privacy
- Remind them that parents have ALWAYS been able to ask what their child is learning, to see a syllabus, a reading list, what units will be covered but that it is not the right of anyone in the general public to know what their neighbor's child is or isn't learning and it especially is not their right to look into a classroom and see who is succeeding and who is struggling, especially with COVID where many children eat in the classroom not a cafeteria, you might see who has a mayo sandwich because their family is struggling to afford food. Remind your reader that it is an infringement of a child's right to privacy.
- Teachers may feel uncertain about what they are allowed to teach without fear of lawsuit is censorship.
- **Look up the word limit for your local paper, mine was 300 words, some may be more some may be less.**

Example letter (I sent this in to my local paper about my local school board election)

As an alumna of Webster Groves School district who is going into education, I am very concerned about the trends we are seeing at school boards across the country. The April 5<sup>th</sup> municipal election includes school board seats and I am concerned about language from some of the candidates. There is a fine line between parent's rights and censorship of teachers. If you look carefully at the books being banned they are stories about people of color or LGBTQ characters and the content being excluded in social studies classrooms is largely the same. Parents' rights advocates say that they these measures are to let parents know what is going on in classrooms. The reality is they won't be letting parents know what is going on in their child's classroom, they will be letting a neighbor know what is going on in someone else's child's classroom. These classroom transparency measures are not for the benefit of parents. A parent

has always been able to email their child's teachers and ask what is being taught. These measures instead infringe on a child's privacy and right to learn. When we challenge, and ban books or lessons we are telling children who aren't White or aren't Christian, or aren't straight that they don't belong. Most concerning of all, when we hear discussion of cameras being placed in classrooms we are letting anyone in the community see who is struggling to read, which child is cannot focus or stay awake, which child is coming to school in the same clothes days in a row, unbathed, because maybe their family couldn't afford to pay the water bill that month. So, I'm asking please be careful when you decide who to vote for in upcoming school board elections, be mindful of what they actually mean.