



1201 16th St, N.W. | Washington, DC 20036 | Phone: (202) 833-4000

Rebecca S. Pringle  
*President*

Princess R. Moss  
*Vice President*

Noel Candelaria  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

Kim A. Anderson  
*Executive Director*

March 7, 2023

Committee on Education and the Workforce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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 thank the committee for considering these comments in your markup of the Parents Bill of Rights Act (H.R. 5) and the Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act of 2023 (H.R. 734). We urge you to vote NO on these bills. Votes related to them may be included in the NEA Report Card for the 118th Congress.

NEA members believe parents, as well as guardians and other family members, have the right and the responsibility to partner with educators to ensure students have the learning opportunities, resources, and support for success. They are a welcome and crucial presence in schools: strategizing with educators when children face hurdles and celebrating when they achieve milestones, volunteering at events, chaperoning field trips, leading PTAs, mentoring students, and actively engaging in many other ways with students and educators. Educators look for ways to foster parent engagement, even when parents, due to work schedules or other commitments, do not have the flexibility to attend parent-teacher conferences or other school functions regularly. This is particularly true for parents who must work multiple jobs to make ends meet or are caregivers for other family members. As teachers and support professionals who dedicate their lives to helping each of their students learn and thrive, our members know firsthand that a healthy school community is made up not only of dedicated staff members and engaged students, but of interested and involved parents and other loved ones.

The Parents Bill of Rights Act ignores the reality of what is happening in schools every day. In fact, 80 percent of parents with children in public K-12 schools said in a recent Gallup poll they were satisfied with their children's education. They appreciate that educators are striving to connect with their children—students who have a variety of gifts and challenges. Instead of building on this trust, the legislation would undercut it by stoking racial and social animosity. Instead of bringing us together to focus on what will really help students—an inspiring, inclusive, and age-appropriate curriculum that prepares them for the future in schools that are safe from gun violence—this approach encourages parents to view educators as the enemy. This us-versus-them mindset hurts students, disregards educators' professionalism, and diverts our attention from a basic American value: *All* students—no matter their race, ZIP Code, or background—deserve the support, tools, and opportunity to learn and succeed.

What's more, the legislation tells teachers, school counselors, librarians, and other school professionals that despite their education, expertise, experience, and dedication to their students, they cannot be trusted to work with parents and their communities to determine what materials are appropriate, how to design curricula that meet students' needs, nor how to ascertain students' progress. This will only exacerbate an educator shortage that has become a five-alarm fire nearly everywhere, from small towns to major cities. [In an NEA survey last year](#), 55 percent of educators said they are ready to leave the profession they love earlier than planned. Congress should not pass laws that will hasten this trend.

Additionally, the library requirements, including the mandate that school libraries maintain online catalogs that are available to parents and students, are redundant; this is already standard practice. The legislation would assist a vocal minority in its efforts to increase the censorship and book bans we are witnessing from coast to coast. We do not prepare young people to succeed in our diverse nation and interconnected world by taking books off library shelves. We prepare them for the future by planting the seeds for lifelong curiosity and growth, both of which are instrumental in navigating change and challenge.

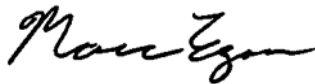
The bill would undermine local control and educators' autonomy to do their jobs by inserting the federal government as a national school board. It would also impose several costly unfunded mandates that would require districts to find the money to meet these new regulations. We oppose any additional amendments to this bill that would further erode local control and encourage censorship and book bans. We support any amendments that would enhance local control by leaving decisions about curricula, books, and other matters to educators, parents, and communities.

We also strongly oppose the Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act because it is intended only to target and stigmatize transgender students and would do nothing to strengthen Title IX. The legislation is an attempt to erase transgender children from public life and exclude them from fully participating in the activities that comprise a well-rounded education, including sports.

The legislation violates our fundamental American rights and could do actual harm to transgender individuals. Research in the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* reports that 82 percent of transgender individuals have considered suicide, and more than 40 percent have attempted it, with ["suicidality highest among transgender youth."](#) The study adds: "...youth who do not feel a sense of belonging at school have a greater suicide risk." A law that pointedly excludes transgender students from participating in sports clearly does not tell them that they belong.

Educators throughout our nation are devoted to discovering students' interests and unlocking their potential. We ask that you shift your focus from divisive issues that do not contribute to student success and instead focus on getting students the individualized support they need, keeping guns out of schools, and addressing educator shortages. Parents and educators are united on the challenges that confront our schools. If Congress works with us, 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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc Egan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association