



# NORTH COUNTY LGBTQ RESOURCE CENTER

For immediate release on May 24th 2022

**RE: Solana Beach School District Soft Ban on School Books**

## **Point of Contacts:**

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## **Statement Opposing Solana School District’s Soft Ban on School Books: Our Families Aren’t Hiding in a Closet or Behind a Desk**

*The North County LGBTQ Resource Center along with the many organization\*\* signatory of this statement are expressing disappointment about the actions taken by the Solana Beach School District and request a meeting with the representative of the district to discuss, review, and hopefully address these concerns.*

Library books featuring LGBTQIA+ themes and characters are under attack across the United States with the introduction of policies and procedures censoring and surveilling students. These assaults on Free Speech have found a home here in San Diego County.

The Solana Beach School District Board has voted to make it easier to advance censorship and surveillance of students (From April 2022: <https://www.delmartimes.net/news/story/2022-04-20/solana-beach-school-district-approves-library-plan>)

Despite rhetoric to “recognize the contributions of people from a variety of groups,” the Solana Beach School District advanced policies which restrict, limit, and delay students’ access to diverse materials, including gender-affirming books.

As updated on April 14, 2022, the Board adopted amendments to the District’s “Selection, Reconsideration, and Maintenance Plan for School Libraries.” It creates new, separate bookshelves for materials which they deem to be vaguely “instructive in nature, take a particular position on a debatable topic, or require additional adult facilitation.”

The District also adopted a new “Opt-Out” form that expands a Parent/Guardian’s ability to restrict their child from specific book titles or entire topics by instituting a new “Opt-Out” form. These restrictions don’t only impact individual students because the school’s policy is to “select an alternate text” when a “certain text is restricted for one or more students.”

For books on the shelves, librarians are supposed to “gently and discreetly redirect students” away from books they are individually banned from reading. This type of surveillance will foster mistrust, fear, and oppression.

While neutral in language, as applied to our students, these policies have the very real effect of erasing our families, history, and people from the classroom and library shelves.

Putting a library book behind the desk can be just as harmful as removing it entirely. The restriction makes it more difficult for students to access the library book and stigmatizes it as something dirty or shameful.

It is important for young people to have trusting relationships, a sense of purpose and belonging, and to learn and practice the skills needed to work toward their goals and contribute to their communities. When students have access to various books, perspectives, and opinions, they learn and practice empathy, perspective taking, and active listening to build deeper connections with one another.

Children come from all kinds of families. Families should be celebrated as part of the strength of our diversity. LGBTQIA+ students and children with same-sex parents, trans parents, or guardians who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community attend schools across the country – including across the Solana Beach School District.

The District's actions are not only limiting but insulting to the very youth they purport to protect. Worse yet, for LGBTQIA+ students, these actions place them at higher risk of suicide because of how mistreated and stigmatized their very existence is, including now in their own school libraries.

This is not an isolated attack. Nationally, state lawmakers are moving on even more explicit book bans targeting the LGBTQIA+ community and BIPOC authors and experiences. Locally, we have already seen racial and homophobic slurs spray-painted at San Dieguito High School Academy. We witnessed organized opposition to the Chula Vista public library's Drag Queen Story Hour.

At a time when our youth are bullied and suffer from depression, isolation, and social rejection at higher rates, LGBTQIA+ library books play a crucial role in educational efforts to encourage respect for differences.

We must speak out forcefully against any attempt to erase us from the library shelves because when they win, they endanger the future health and well-being of the country's most critical resource: Our youth.

If you live in the Solana Beach School District, submit a "Student and Parent Recommendations for Library Media Center Materials" form encouraging the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ themed books and list specific titles, if comfortable.

**SIGNED BY:**

**ORGANIZATIONS:**

- North County LGBTQ Resource Center
- San Diego Pride
- ACLU of San Diego & Imperial Counties
- Diversionary Theatre
- TransFamily Support Services
- ADL San Diego
- Lambda Archives of San Diego
- Alliance San Diego
- Avellaka Program Rainbow of Truth Circle
- Art of Pride, a Program of San Diego Pride
- She Fest, a Program of San Diego Pride
- Pride Youth, a Program of San Diego Pride

- GLSEN San Diego County
- California Library Association
- PFLAG San Diego County
- Everylibrary

## **INDIVIDUALS:**

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