

Hello, board. My name is Amanda Jones. I'm the 2021 School Library general national school librarian of the year and a resident of Livingston Parish. I'm here on behalf of my own child who lives in this district and as a taxpayer. I am the president of Louisiana's Association of School Librarians, and I'm speaking on behalf in that capacity today.

Local challenges are often done with the best intentions and in the name of age appropriateness. They often target marginalized communities such as our black indigenous people of color, and our LGBT community. They also target books on sexual health and reproduction. Considering that Livingston Parish has the highest rate of children in foster care per capita in Louisiana, and that number has doubled over the years. I find it ironic that any member of the community will want to limit access books on reproduction or relocate it away from our children who need it the most. Once you start relocating and banning one topic, it becomes a slippery slope and where does it end? All members of our community deserve to be seen, have access to information and see themselves in our public library collection. **Censoring and relocating books and displays is harmful to our community and will be extremely harmful to our most vulnerable group, our children.** According to the Trevor Project, LGBTQ youth are not inherently prone to suicide risk, however, they are in a higher risk because of how they're mistreated and stigmatized in our society. Libraries are for everyone. According to the American Library Association, of which I'm a member and holds several offices. Libraries are a cornerstone of the community dedicated to serving the information needs of everyone. As such, they collect and make available a wide variety of information resources, representing the range of human thought and experience. With such a broad spectrum of ideas and information available, it is inevitable that people will occasionally encounter resources they believe to be inappropriate for their own family. Just because you enter a library it does not mean that you will not see something that you do not like. Libraries have diverse collections with resources for many points of view. And a library's mission is provide access to all users. All library users have the First Amendment right to borrow read, view and listen to library resources. According to the American Library Association. If an individual is concerned about a child or young adult resource or its location in the library, that individual has the right to go through the library's reconsideration policy that is already in place in our parish. Each family has the right to determine which library resources are acceptable for their own children, but individuals must also realize that they must afford the same rights to other parents. The citizens of our parents consist of taxpayers who are white, black, brown, gay, straight, Christian and non-Christian people from all backgrounds and walks of life. And no one portion of the community should dictate what the rest of the citizens have access to. **Just because you don't want to read it or see it it does not give you the right to deny others or demand its relocation.** If we remove or relocate books with LGBTQ themes or sexual health content, what message is that sending to our community? **Why is your belief system any more important than others?** What will be next if you accomplish this mission? Parents have a personal responsibility to monitor their own child's reading and no one else's. The Livingston parish Library Director Giovanni Tairov has accomplished wonderful wonders for our public library and made it an award-winning system. There's a reason that The Louisiana Library Association named him the 2019, Public Library Director of the year. Trust his judgment and those of the other dedicated Livingston Parish library employees. There is already a solid correction development policy in place. **Nobody is**

putting pornography and children's sections of the library. Stop that false narrative. The librarians over the collection of Library Science Degrees in his professional reviews, which lists ages of relevant relevancy and age appropriateness, before deciding where to place it in the library. There is already a book challenge process if a community member does not like a particular book or location. As a board member, you should already know that. To board member Erin Sandberg and place this item on the agenda, I will say this. You once posted on social media that there are folks who do not agree with you, and that we can be one of your greatest teachers. And that is a very admirable statement. I would love to teach you about how harmful censorship can be, policing and agenda items like this that will affect our youth and historical, historically marginalized communities. To the entire board. I will say this, I grew up in this parish I have lived here for 44 years, I was raised that God is love. What I've come to realize is that what many people mean is that God is love only if you had the same religious and political beliefs as them. I have lived in our parish for a long time, I am a mother of a child of our system, and I have been a Livingston Parish library card holder since 1983. I have watched our Public Library grow to be one of our parish's biggest assets, something that we can be proud of. I will remind board members that regardless of your own beliefs on the topic of book content location to think about this. No one on the right side of history has ever been on the side of censorship and hiding books. In the words of author Steven Chomsky. Banning books gives us silence when we need speech. It closes our ears when we need to listen, it makes us blind when we need sight. Hate and fear disguised as moral outrage have no place in Livingston Parish. Thank you for allowing me to speak.