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Free Speech Groups Object to Bill Requiring Educators Notify Parents Prior to Use of Sex Ed. Materials

New York, NY, 1/11/2017- The National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) and other organizations committed to defending the freedom to read are urging New Hampshire legislators to reject a proposed bill that would require schools to notify parents prior to the teaching of materials with information about human sexuality.

HB 103 requires New Hampshire school districts to provide parents with two weeks' notice prior to any teaching of "curriculum course material used for instruction of human sexuality or human sexual education." While the legislation is intended for sexual education classes, it is broad enough to affect a much broader range of materials. The proposed legislation follows an identical bill that Governor Maggie Hassan vetoed in 2015 citing concerns about the wide range of the bill's effects and the added stigma it places on sex education. HB 103 is also comparable to legislation currently proposed in Virginia that would require educators notify parents whenever "sexually explicit" materials are taught.

NCAC's letter to the New Hampshire House Education Committee underlines the potential for the bill to "wreak havoc" on entire curriculums. It highlights the overbroad nature of the legislation that could include pedagogically valuable materials taught outside of sexual education classes. Time honored classics, like Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl*, Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, could, indeed, be singled out for "sexual" content. It also expresses concern that the bill may cause confusion around a school's First Amendment obligations.

The letter is signed by the New Hampshire Civil Liberties Union, Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, National Council of Teachers of English, American Booksellers for Free Expression, Authors Guild and Pen America.

"Our concern is that the proposed legislation invites parents to issue challenges for materials they subjectively consider to be inappropriate," said NCAC's Youth Free Expression Program Associate Josh Zuckerman. "This runs the risk of a single parent disrupting the educational process for every student."

[READ THE LETTER](#)

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The National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) is an alliance of 50 national non-profit organizations dedicated to defending freedom of thought, inquiry and expression.