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Free Speech Groups Urge New Hampshire Governor to Veto Bill Requiring Educators to Notify Parents Prior to Use of Sex Ed. Materials

New York, NY, 4/3/2017- The National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) and other organizations committed to defending the freedom to read are urging New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu to veto a bill requiring schools to notify parents prior to the teaching of materials with information about human sexuality. The groups argue the bill will stigmatize the teaching of educationally valuable materials and undermine the quality of education in New Hampshire.

HB 103 requires New Hampshire school districts to provide parents with two weeks' notice prior to any teaching of "course material used for instruction of human sexuality or human sexual education." It follows an identical bill that former Governor Maggie Hassan vetoed in 2015 citing concerns about the range of the bill's effects and the added stigma it places on sex education. HB 103 was passed in the New Hampshire House on February 2 and the Senate on March 30th. **Governor Sununu has to make a final decision on the future of the bill by Wednesday.**

NCAC's letter to Governor Sununu underlines the potential for the bill to "wreak havoc" on an entire curriculum. While the legislation is intended for sexual education classes, it is vague and broad enough to affect a wide range of materials. The legislation could also, for example, single out time-honored classics, like Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* or Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, for "sexual" content. The bill will also cause confusion around a school's First Amendment obligations by permitting the removal of books over content deemed offensive or disagreeable.

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.

"The bill opens the door to challenges for materials they subjectively consider to be inappropriate," said NCAC's Youth Free Expression Program Associate Josh Zuckerman. "This, inevitably, will end up privileging the opinions of certain parents over those of other parents and professional educators."

[READ THE LETTER](#)

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The National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) is an alliance of 56 national non-profit organizations dedicated to defending freedom of thought, inquiry and expression