

Dear REDACTED Board of Education,

My name is Kelly Jensen, and I'm a resident of REDACTED. I've been active and involved in covering and responding to increased anti-LGBTQ movements across the country and in Illinois over the last several years. I'm absolutely ashamed to see this happening now in REDACTED. I am ashamed, though I am not surprised—those pushing anti-LGBTQ sentiments have been doing so everywhere, and it was only a matter of time.

I'm writing in support of two things. First, thank you for continuing to keep queer books on your shelves in classrooms and libraries. This is a fundamental right for students to have access to books that showcase people both like and unlike them. Censorship and bowing to cleverly-framed "parental rights" activists is doing disservice to your students who deserve the right to learn. NO adult in this community nor any other gets to make the decisions over what other students who are not their own get access to.

Second, I have seen and heard what is happening to educator REDACTED at REDACTED. Per the [Equal Access Act of 1989, section 20](#), all institutions of secondary education—which includes middle schools—which receive federal funds **must allow for GSA and other similar groups**. I understand that the district is in compliance and supports its creation. However, the small, vocal group of anti-LGBTQ conspiracy theorists have waged a harassment campaign against REDACTED, and they plan on showing up to the board meeting April 25 to lodge their complaints. I've attached some relevant Facebook screenshots so you can see the names of those instigating this bullying and harassment of an educator who is not only helping the district follow legal mandates but supporting the ENTIRE community of students enrolled at REDACTED. As you'll see, it's a coordinated effort in a group that began its list of grievances with the closure of in-person teaching during COVID, followed by the mask mandate, the rollout of vaccines, and now, just straight up bigotry toward queer people and queer kids specifically.

It's embarrassing to be in this community with such closed-minded individuals. As an ardent supporter of public education, I worry that when my daughter is old enough to attend our schools, these kinds of baseless, fear-driven attacks will continue. Whether intentional or not, they will impact curriculum and the rights my child has to a broad, encompassing, inclusive education.

You know our demographics here in REDACTED. This is a queer-friendly community, and it's rich in ethnic and racial diversity. Those seeking to shut down any opportunities for our young people to learn this—as mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors—do so because they're no longer the majority and this is their way to exert power. They could get involved and active in REDACTED, but instead, they're on Facebook spreading rumors under the guise of "liberty." If only they knew the actual laws.

Let us continue to be a beacon in a county, state, and country full of people turning away from facts, evidence, and truth. This community does not stand for bigots. Continuing to educate our children with an array of resources and giving them the support to be who they are will help

ensure the next generation does not follow in the embarrassing footprints of some of their parents.

Please also pass my support to REDACTED, to all of the teachers being allies to all of their students, and to the library/media specialists who are standing up for the rights of students, not bowing to the pressures of a few vocal and misinformed individuals.

I've included a link here to one of the presentations I've given to library workers and educators across the country [on the topic of book bans](#) and why they're on the rise. There is a link in there to [the work of John Norcross](#) you'll all find helpful and enlightening for understanding why this and why now. It's manufactured outrage at the local level and now, sadly, REDACTED is experiencing it first hand.

Thank you for your time  
Kelly Jensen