

“MY CHILD, MY BOOKS” PARENT-INVOLVEMENT LIBRARY BILL, FOR MINORS, AN OVERVIEW

August 24, 2023

WE'RE IN DIRE STRAITS!

Contrary to popular belief, our libraries are in trouble; thus, so are our parents—and their children!

“Thank you so much for all you are doing, Carolyn! We recently went to the (Idaho Falls Public Library), and my 12-year-old son picked a book from the cart for the summer reading teen prize. We read a section in the book that was, frankly, shocking and very unsettling. We did not take the book after all.

It is very sad what is being pushed upon our kids!

Thank you for helping to keep them safe. You are doing a wonderful work, and we are praying for you!”

Natasha Stringam, Concerned Mother, July 19, 2023

The proposed “My Child, My Books” Legislative Bill, which would supplement any larger library bill that may enter the fray in the 2024 Legislative session, is the answer. This parents’ rights Bill gives the parents the long overdue opportunity to be part of the “go/no-go” decision on the selection and purchase of books and materials BEFORE these resources are acquired and ultimately inhabited on the shelves in the State’s public-school and community libraries.

This proposed Bill is a two-pronged approach to improving the public schools’ libraries and community/public libraries in the State of Idaho. The legislation addresses two extremely important proposed changes of direction in the current State public-schools and community libraries’ systems:

PROPOSAL 1 - Parental Inclusion in the Selection of Minor-Children Books and Materials

PROPOSAL 2 - Election (not Appointment) of Libraries’ Boards of Trustees Members

BILL PROPOSAL 1

“MY CHILD, MY BOOKS” LEGISLATIVE BILL

PARENTAL INCLUSION IN THE SELECTION OF MINOR-CHILDREN BOOKS AND MATERIALS

“MY CHILD, MY BOOKS” ASSUMPTIONS:

- *1”There are approximately 50 State of Idaho public schools and community libraries making obscene materials available to minor children.”*
- Parents currently have no decision-making authority for the selection, nor purchase, of books, materials, and online educational tools for minors in Idaho’s public school and community libraries.
- Currently, unions, public school boards, principals, school librarians, community library directors, librarians, and other library officials, exclusively, make the decisions for the selection of minor books in all of Idaho’s public school and community libraries.
- The use of union-driven, one-sided material review/ rating systems are resulting in “bad” books in Idaho’s public school and community libraries.
- Parents are the most appropriate, persuasive, and objective decision-makers for their children’s library-book needs.
- Legislative reform is necessary to protect children from accessing obscene materials at taxpayer-funded public schools and community libraries.
- Past legislative attempts via criminal and civil legal actions’ bills during the 2022 and 2023 Legislative Sessions, respectively, have been unsuccessful. A proposed bill in 2022 to repeal the criminal exemption for librarians also failed.

“MY CHILD, MY BOOKS” – THE ANSWER: A UNIQUE “COMPLEMENTARY” DIRECTION

- THE ANSWER: Parents want, deserve, and are appropriate for selecting their children’s books and materials in Idaho’s schools and community libraries! With the aforementioned volumes of inappropriate books and materials located in libraries throughout the State, parents should not have to, as recommended by the Governor:

“...become familiar with the local policies of their library or school trustee board and engage directly with the officials who oversee them.”

It is the role of the executive and legislative branches to support parents, not hand off the legislative responsibilities to the mothers and fathers of each community in the State.

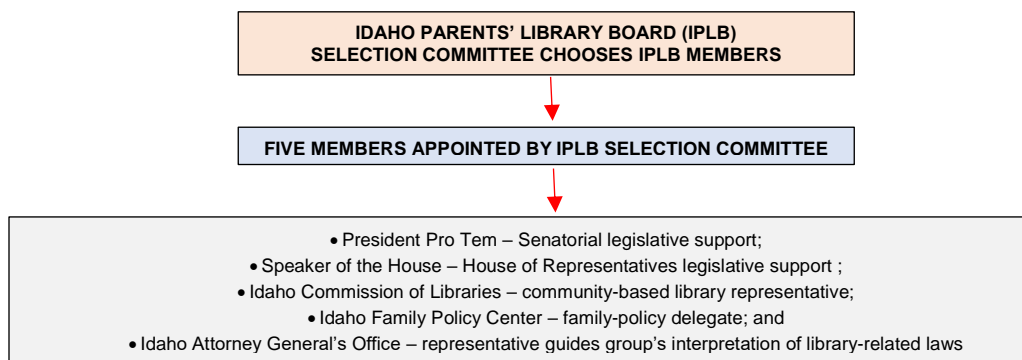
¹ Conzatti, Blaine; Idaho Family Policy Center; “Pornography in Public Schools and Libraries...a statewide problem”; February 27, 2023.

Address, head-on, the aforementioned roughly 50 libraries' obscene-book evidence that currently exists in the State by making the appropriate long-term, coordinated changes necessary to sustain permanent change throughout the entire State. Individual, local efforts will become disjointed and, ultimately, ineffective, over time. To succeed in the long term, a bigger-picture, all-encompassing/inclusive, well-planned, statewide legislative effort is needed.

- This Bill will not supersede, and is complementary to, any library bill(s) that may be surfacing in the 2024 Legislative Session.

“MY CHILD, MY BOOKS” – PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

- ASSUMPTION: Executive Boards prove critical for an organization’s governance, guiding strategic decisions, fostering accountability, acting as a custodian to safeguard long-term success, as well as shaping an organization’s ultimate “destiny”.
- HOW-TO: An Idaho Parents’ Library Board (IPLB) Selection Committee comprising State of Idaho President Pro Tem; Speaker of the House; Idaho Commission of Libraries; Idaho Family Policy Center; and Idaho Attorney General’s Office, will be implemented to select one member, each, to form a diverse IPLB. Once IPLB members are chosen, the IPLB will oversee the program and will select those parents who have the time and background (U.S. Supreme Court Miller Test expertise, voracious readers, etc. - adjudged by the IPLB in its parent-review process) to adequately contribute to the decision-making process.



“MY CHILD, MY BOOKS” PROJECT ASSUMPTION OF COSTS		
PHASE I (July 1, 2024 – January 1, 2025)		
COST TYPE	AMOUNT	TOTAL
Choose IPLB Board - IPLB Member Salary	*\$16K/member/annum (prorated amount)	\$40,000
Choose Parents	* Parent salary (\$10K/parent) commences in Phase II	0.00
TOTAL:		\$40,000
PHASE II – FY2025 (** December 31, 2025 - Completion of Phase II)		
• IPLB Member Salary	\$16K/board member/annum	80,000.00
• Bi-Annual Trips by IPLB to Northern, Central, and Southern Idaho Participating Libraries @10K/trip	Two trips to three Idaho regions @ \$10K/trip	20,000.00
• Parent Salary	\$10K/parent @ 50 Idaho public school and community libraries	500,000.00
TOTAL:		\$600,000.00

*** Salaries for Board and parents: “You Get What You Pay For”**

This idiom is absolutely applicable to this Program. Board members and parent participants are being asked to contribute an inordinate amount of time and effort to their individual positions. Constantly seeking volunteers, with their exceedingly high turnover rates, will threaten the Program’s operational efficiency. Giving these individuals a concrete monetary incentive throughout the Program will keep both groups focused and on task, as well as cultivate pride and self-worth in their specific activities.

**** Go/No-Go Decision**

This program gives the opportunity to the legislature to continue on to a long-term program, to be determined by a majority of the legislative body, or “opt out”, if a majority of the legislature is not gleaning a positive return on their investment.

POSITIVE ADVANTAGES TO IDAHO PARENTS’ LIBRARY BOARD (IPLB) INVOLVEMENT

With a wide range of expertise and proficiency from an assortment of groups, the IPLB will:

1. Select those parents who will have the character and forward-thinking capacity to participate in the selection/acquisition of “good” books at appropriate libraries, for the State of Idaho’s youth.
2. Have a say in the State’s library-related policies, laws, rules, guidelines, and related programs.

3. Be a “sounding board” for the parents, as well as the State’s libraries, who need objective, varied-experience input to make appropriate decisions in a variety of issues for their respective libraries.
4. Be a final decision-maker for those libraries that come to an impasse in the selection of books/materials.
5. Have the opportunity to travel to three regions of the State, twice per annum, and render first-hand interface opportunities with the State’s libraries’ personnel and decision-makers in the aforementioned, respective regions (See Phase II).

POSITIVE ADVANTAGES TO PARENT INVOLVEMENT

With parents involved in the selection of books/materials for public schools and community libraries, this new approach will:

- Give an opportunity to “heed” parents’ many requests for involvement in decisions regarding the books their children read, **before the selection is made**, and the books stay in the libraries, in perpetuity.
- Give an objective perspective to the books Idaho’s children and young adults read—by people who have the children’s best interests at heart.
- Bring impartiality and fairness to the current one-sided material review and rating systems.
- Bring a higher level of morality and standards to the library books/materials from which to choose.
- Combat teachers’ unions, library unions, publishers, and library personnel’s power over the selection/purchase of, sexually explicit books.
- Embolden parents’ attempts to stand up for, and support, their children.
- Help to halt “groomers” (organizations, groups, associations, and adults who want to exploit or abuse impressionable children by building trust and an emotional connection with them, at an early age, for the purpose of sexualization).
- Who can say “no” to the parents?

**BILL PROPOSAL 2
 “MY CHILD, MY BOOKS” LEGISLATIVE BILL
 ELECTION (NOT APPOINTMENT) OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES’ BOARDS OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS**

Currently, Title 33, Chapter 26, of the Idaho Code provides for “public libraries” to allow cities to establish tax-supported libraries. Their boards are chosen by appointment by the mayor and/or city manager, with terms of office for five years. Title 33, Chapter 27, of the Idaho Code provides for “library districts” to allow boards to be elected by the district voters, with terms of office for six years. This Bill eliminates Chapter 26 and provides for the integration of “public libraries” into Chapter 27 to allow “public libraries” board members to also be elected by the electorate.

Issues arise at Idaho’s community/public libraries when the libraries’ boards of trustees are not elected by the people, but appointed by politicians: At the Idaho Falls Public Library, for example, the mayor has appointed each Board of Trustee member for a total of 16 years per Board member.

Election by the constituency, rather than appointment by an outside political source, puts control back in the hands of the people. This ensures that citizens have input, thus avoiding the possibility of politicization of the library board. Giving the people the opportunity to vote for these positions, will also encourage larger voter turn-out and an increase in impartiality, neutrality, and fairness.

CAVEAT

The project recommendations are those of the Parents Against Bad Books organization, solely. Statements reflected in this document pertaining to the Idaho Parents’ Library Board (IPLB) Selection Committee members, number of IPLB members, IPLB members, cost assumptions, as well as other project proposals, are suggestions and open to possible modification.



Parents Against Bad Books, an affiliate of the Idaho Parents for Educational Choice Organization

208.520.0903 (Carolyn) - 208.954.6579 (Tom)

Carolyn Harrison – carolyn@idahoparentsforeducationalchoice.com

Tom Harrison – tom@idahoparentsforeducationalchoice.com

Please sign our Petition for Parent Involvement at:

www.idahoparentsforeducationalchoice.com