Thesis:

By banning books by LGBTQ+ authors, it deprives the youth—not just the queer youth—of useful and essential information required to grow and develop the empathy necessary to make positive changes in the world.

Introduction:

* In recent years, there’s been a growing number of books banned that contain LGBTQ+ themes.
* Diverse literature is incredibly important for developing empathy in students.
* Empathy is one of the most important traits of a student; developmental malleability is crucial for efficient learning.
* Over these past few years, there’s been a lot of protest against the censorship.
* Many school board meetings have been held on whether books on LGBTQ+ topics should be kept in their libraries.

In recent years, there’s been a growing number of books banned that contain LGBTQ+ themes. The “Don’t Say Gay” and “Stop W.O.K.E.” acts have caused over 1.6 million books in classrooms and school libraries to be reviewed. The process for reviewing a book typically is to keep the book on the shelf until proven guilty, but with a lack of enforcement, this is not always the case. Diverse literature has proven important for developing empathy in students and developmental malleability is crucial for efficient learning. Over these past few years, there’s been a lot of protest against the censorship. Many school board meetings have been held on whether books on LGBTQ+ topics should be kept in the classroom. By banning books by LGBTQ+ authors, it deprives the youth—not just the queer youth—of useful and essential information required to grow and develop the empathy necessary to make positive changes in the world.

In the past few years, there’s been a growing number of books banned that contain LGBTQ+ themes. In Duval County, Florida alone, 1.6 million books in classrooms and school libraries were reviewed to keep to standards with the “Don’t Say Gay” law and the “Stop W.O.K.E.” act. An ACLU article summarizes the “Stop W.O.K.E.” act nicely, “a classroom censorship law which severely restricts Florida educators and students from learning and talking about issues related to race and gender in higher education classrooms” [1]. The act specifically references “higher education,” which in America means any optional education after high school. These students are not children. The “Parental Rights in Education” bill, also called, the “Don’t Say Gay” bill, or “HB 1557” (House Bill 1557), caused quite a stir upon its announcement. The Williams Institute, “the leading research center on sexual orientation and gender identity law and public policy” [4], summarizes the bill’s impact. They say that it, “prohibits classroom instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity before the 4th grade and requires such instruction to be ‘age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate’ thereafter” [3]. When a book is reviewed, typically the process is to keep it on the shelf until proven guilty, but with a lack of enforcement, this is not always the case. There have been many instances of books being taken off the shelf during—or even—before the review process. Diverse literature has proven important for developing empathy in students and developmental malleability is crucial for effective learning. Therefore, banning books on LGBTQ+ themes—or by LGBTQ+ authors due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity—deprives the public perspective of the necessary stories required to develop empathy.

Works cited:

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