ENG 110

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Books Bans Destroy Empathy

In the past few years, there’s been a growing number of books banned that contain LGBTQ+ themes. In Duval Country, Florida alone 1.6 million books in classroom sand 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 National Education Association includes the purpose of the “Don’t Say Gay” law in a digital article, “[to] prohibit classroom discussion about sexual orientation or gender identity in certain grade levels or in a specified manner.” [2] 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. Diverse literature has proven important for developing empathy in students and developmental malleability is crucial for efficient learning. By banning books on LGBTQ+ themes—or by LGBTQ+ authors due to their sexual orientation/gender identity—it deprives the public perspective of necessary stories required to develop empathy.

Works Cited

1. “Pernell v. Lamb.” American Civil Liberties Union, 16 May 2024, [www.aclu.org/cases/pernell-v-lamb#summary](http://www.aclu.org/cases/pernell-v-lamb#summary)
2. “What You Need to Know about Florida’s ‘Don’t Say Gay’ and ‘Don’t Say They’ Laws, Book Bans, and Other Curricula Restrictions.” National Education Association, 12 June 2023.

<https://www.nea.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/30424-know-your-rights_web_v4.pdf>