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English Composition

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Essay 3

Across the United States, there has been increasing uproar by parents over what their children are being taught in schools. For example, there has been panic over sex education, critical race theory, and LGBT+ issues being taught in school. Parents have been protesting these things and others being taught in schools. They have shown up to school board meetings to state their case and have even been attempting to pass legislation such as Florida HB 1557, the Parental Rights in Education bill, also called the Don’t Say Gay bill by its opponents. This bill prevents sexual orientation and gender identity from being discussed in classrooms. Parents should not have this power to dictate what their children are taught.

Many parents justify their imposition on their children’s education by saying that they know what is best for their child, but do they? Most parents aren’t experts in anything that their children are learning about in school, and many remember very little of their own grade school education. Some may be experts in one thing that their children are learning about, but that is not the case for most parents. In the case of most parents, they are no more equipped to determine what their children should learn than their children are. Parents also use this statement to mean that they know what information, true or not, is suitable for their children to know because of how that information would affect their children. This is also false on its face. Parents may know their children personally, but most are not child psychologists or experts on education.

Allowing parents to dictate what their children learn also increases opportunities for abuse. The parents advocating for greater parental control of school curriculum may or may not be doing so with the intention of abusing their children, but the outcome is the same. Even when parents have the best intentions for their children, they still often act against their best interest. When children are restricted in what they are allowed to know, they are less likely to understand when what is being done to them is wrong. The restriction of information is also abusive in and of itself. When someone is prevented from learning something, they are robbed of the intellectual and emotional growth that can be gleaned from the restricted information and may cause children to grow up with a warped idea of reality.

Young people should be given the tools to think for themselves, and parents invading the only space that many they have for freely exploring new ideas stifles their intellectual growth. When students aren’t challenged with different and potentially difficult ideas, they don’t learn the critical thinking skills that will help them succeed throughout life. Students may struggle with upsetting information that they learn later in life if they aren’t talked about in a safe school environment and aren’t taught to think critically about them. It is important for the ideas presented in school settings to be age-appropriate, but parents are not the best judges of this standard. They are too close to the issue and will often try to shelter their children from truths that the children should know about.

Notes

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