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April 1, 2022

Hon. Andy Beshear
Governor of Kentucky
Office of the Governor of Kentucky
700 Capital Ave., Ste. 100
Frankfort, KY 40601

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Governor Beshear:

We are writing to ask that you veto Senate Bill 1. I am writing to you not only as a representative of my organization but also as a concerned parent of two school-aged children. Senate Bill 1 contains many dangerous provisions restricting the ability for educators and parents to have valuable input in their students' school communities and violates the First Amendment right to freedom of expression.

The bill sponsors amended Senate Bill 1 to include Senate Bill 138, a classroom censorship bill. This series of education restrictions claim to address what is a non-existent problem. This law will impair our students' ability to engage with and understand the world around them. This component of the bill is part of a nationwide strategy meant to undermine honest discussions around systemic racism, privilege, patriarchy, white supremacy, homophobia, transphobia, and social equity. Students have a constitutional right to read, learn, and discuss vital topics in schools. Under Senate Bill 1, educators and students could be denied their free speech rights under the First Amendment if told they are unable to discuss certain aspects of our nation's history and how this history uniquely informs our current cultural and social environments.

This legislation is a clear attack on marginalized people, specifically impacting people of color and LGBTQ students. This is especially alarming considering these groups of students remain at significantly higher risk of negative mental and physical health outcomes, a rising problem within our student populations nationwide. It is imperative schools are safe places for our children to exist wholly as themselves and legislation restricting educators' ability to openly discuss how real-life issues such as systemic racism that currently impacts our students' lives is unethical and dangerous.



Consequently, we at the ACLU of Kentucky, strongly urge you to veto this legislation. We urge you to defend the educators' and students' First Amendment right to free expression; to read, learn, and discuss free from a viewpoint-based censorship. We urge you to continue to allow educators and parents to have decision making power on important choices that impact their students' education, but most importantly, their students' wellbeing.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I hope you, your family, and your staff have a restful interim.

Sincerely,

Kia Nishida
ACLU of Kentucky