



Protect Children From Harm Now!



DEFEND FLORIDA



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Since 2018 many organizations have been fighting against the dangerous mental health crisis caused by children being exposed to material that is harmful to them.

When children are exposed to such materials it causes mental harm to children. For example, a doctor noted, “boys who were exposed to sexually explicit media were three times more likely to engage in oral sex and intercourse two years after exposure than non-exposed boys.”¹

A study showed that prolonged exposure to obscene materials “can lead to exaggerated beliefs of sexual activity among peers, sexually permissible attitudes, and sexual callousness, including more negative attitudes toward sexual partners.”²

According to a recent article by U.S. News and World Report, mental illness costs America \$282 Billion annually.³

We recognize, acknowledge, and are thankful for the steps that Governor DeSantis and the Florida Legislature have taken to address this but in many public school districts, the situation has stayed the same or gotten worse.

For example, as of the 2022-2023 released challenge list, Hillsborough County has removed only one book for not aligning with state law, Broward has removed three, and Palm Beach has removed none. These three counties alone represent a majority of public school children in Florida.

We also have counties, based on this same FLDOE list, such as Brevard, Marion, and St. Johns, which have had several objections, yet with few books being removed.

We know by working with parents and concerned residents on the ground that school districts create difficult processes to determine how many objections someone can file. We also know that school districts use Part C of the Miller Test to argue that even when a book has content that violates educational law (F.S.1006.28), the books still have literary value based on Part C of the Miller Test, which is stated in Florida State Statute 847.001. Therefore, they argue the book should still be kept on the shelves of public schools.

¹<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/real-healing/201208/overexposed-and-under-prepared-the-effects-of-early-exposure-to-sexual>

² Braun-Courville DK, Rojas M. Exposure to sexually explicit Web sites and adolescent sexual attitudes and behaviors. *J Adolesc Health*. 2009 Aug;45(2):156-62. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2008.12.004. Epub 2009 Feb 20. PMID: 19628142.

³https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2024-04-24/282-billion-what-mental-illness-costs-america-each-year#google_vignette

We believe this Part C language has created a loophole in all the work that Governor DeSantis and the state legislative body have done in eliminating these harmful materials from our public schools.

We believe that updating 847.001 to include a Part D (please go to our website or this link for copy of the suggested language: <https://goflca.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/F.S.-847.001-Comparison-.pdf>) would solve this loophole.

Based on a legal assessment completed by CDF's top lawyer:

- *Multiple court cases including supreme court cases show that you can differentiate between adults and minors when it comes to what is obscene.*
- *Governments can restrict the access of minors to sexual materials if it is harmful to minors.*

It is critically important that the state of Florida protect children from the many effects of being exposed to material that will be harmful to their mental health. By making the necessary changes Florida can build resilient children by protecting their mental health, we will preserve the original intent of the Miller test, and reduce the cost of medical expenses.

We, the undersigned, strongly urge the Governor, the Florida House, and the Florida Senate to take the necessary action to protect children's mental health.

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