**Sample Email to State Lawmakers**

I am increasingly concerned about the growing number of states enacting laws banning certain concepts and books from public schools, including state colleges and universities. As one of your constituents, and a member of the Authors Guild, the nation’s largest and oldest nonprofit organization for professional writers, I urge you to vote against any proposed bill seeking to outlaw the teaching of critical race theory or that restricts discussions or texts related to racism, sexism, or sexual orientation or identity.

As of November 24, [12 states have enacted laws](https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/map-where-critical-race-theory-is-under-attack/2021/06) or taken other steps that prohibits teaching critical race theory or limits how K-12 teachers can discuss racism and sexism.These restrictions are often confusing and wide-sweeping resulting in the banning of discussions and texts related to race, gender, and sexuality in general. Indeed, according to the American Library Association, among the books most frequently targeted to ban are Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* (1970), George M. Johnson’s *All Boys Aren’t Blue: A Memoir-Manifesto* (2020), Maia Kobabe’s *Gender Queer: A Memoir* (2019), Jonathan Evison’s *Lawn Boy* (2018), and Alison Bechdel’s *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* (2006). Yet, none of these works refer to critical race theory or systemic racism.

At a time when the country has never been more polarized, it is hardly surprising that voters, especially parents, may object to certain materials and ideas taught in public schools. Most schools today already offer students one or more alternative book titles if a parent has a concern about a particular assignment. A teacher or principal should encourage parents to exercise that option if they object strongly to a specific work, but that doesn’t mean that their complaint should disrupt what the rest of the class reads.

Moreover, public and private K-12 schools alike must meet state and federal education mandates regarding what concepts, subjects, and skills children must master to advance to the next grade. School boards working in conjunction with trained, accredited principals, teachers, school librarians, and resources professionals, NOT state lawmakers, are in the best position to determine which texts are most effective and beneficial in helping students meet those mandates.

While parents have the right to decide what people, values, and beliefs they wish to expose their children to, including the decision to homeschool, U.S. law does not grant them the right to impose those decisions on other parents’ children. Unhappy voters, of course, tend to be the loudest, but that doesn’t necessarily mean that they speak for the majority, which is why I urge you not to bow to such pressure.

Best regards.

Name, City, State