



AGENDA REPORT

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DATE: October 5, 2023
TO: Members of the City Council and Members of the Public
FROM: Councilmember Kalb
SUBJECT: RESOLUTION IN OPPOSITION TO BOOK BANS; IN SUPPORT OF PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF EVERY INDIVIDUAL TO ACCESS A WIDE VARIETY OF BOOKS IN LIBRARIES, SCHOOLS AND ELSEWHERE; AND IN SUPPORT OF PUBLIC AND SCHOOL LIBRARIANS DEFENDING LITERARY FREEDOM AND DIVERSITY AND OPPOSING GOVERNMENT CENSORSHIP OF BOOKS

Dear Colleagues and Members of the Public,

Banning and censoring books is an extremely troubling practice and it is on the rise. PEN America, a nonprofit that supports and protects First Amendment, reports that more than 3,300 books were banned in the 2022-2023 school year, representing a 33% increase from the previous year. This comes despite the fact that 67% of voters, both Democrat and Republican, oppose efforts to remove books from school libraries.

While concerns may arise regarding certain content in books, book bans are a detrimental and counterproductive approach to addressing these concerns. By banning books, misguided legislators and librarians impose their own thoughts and opinions on others. Reading is a fundamental skill, critical to learning, and individuals have the ability to make their own decisions about what they read and believe.

I believe that in the City of Oakland and beyond, everyone has a right to access a variety of books in schools, libraries, bookstores, and online.

Please join me in supporting this legislation and opposing book bans.

Respectfully submitted,

Councilmember Dan Kalb