

1 State of Arkansas *As Engrossed: S2/15/23 S2/21/23 H3/13/23*  
2 94th General Assembly **A Bill**  
3 Regular Session, 2023

SENATE BILL 81

4  
5 By: Senators D. Sullivan, *Stone*  
6 By: Representatives Gonzales, *Bentley*  
7

8 **For An Act To Be Entitled**

9 AN ACT TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING LIBRARIES AND  
10 OBSCENE MATERIALS MADE AVAILABLE TO MINORS; TO AMEND  
11 THE LAW CONCERNING THE POSSESSION, SALE,  
12 DISTRIBUTION, OR FURNISHING OF OBSCENE MATERIALS; TO  
13 CREATE THE OFFENSE OF FURNISHING A HARMFUL ITEM TO A  
14 MINOR; TO AMEND THE CRIMINAL CODE IN RELATION TO  
15 OBSCENE MATERIALS LOANED BY A LIBRARY; TO ALLOW A  
16 PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A MINOR TO ACCESS THE  
17 MINOR'S LIBRARY RECORDS; TO PROVIDE FOR A CIVIL CAUSE  
18 OF ACTION AGAINST GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES THAT POSSESS,  
19 SELL, OR DISTRIBUTE OBSCENE MATERIALS; TO AMEND THE  
20 LAW CONCERNING THE PROCESS FOR CHALLENGING MATERIALS  
21 INCLUDED IN A LIBRARY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.  
22  
23

24 **Subtitle**

25 TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING LIBRARIES AND  
26 OBSCENE MATERIALS; TO CREATE THE OFFENSE  
27 OF FURNISHING A HARMFUL ITEM TO A MINOR;  
28 AND TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING OBSCENE  
29 MATERIALS LOANED BY A LIBRARY.  
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32 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
33

34 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 5, Chapter 27, Subchapter 2, is amended  
35 to add an additional section to read as follows:

36 5-27-212. Furnishing a harmful item to a minor – Failure to report.



1 (a) As used in this section:

2 (1) "Harmful to minors" means the same as defined in § 5-68-501;

3 (2) "Internet" means the combination of computer facilities and  
4 electromagnetic transmission media, and related equipment and software,  
5 comprising the interconnected worldwide network of computer networks that  
6 employ the Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) or any  
7 successor protocol to transmit information;

8 (3) "Internet website" means a location where material placed in  
9 a computer server-based file archive is publicly accessible over the internet  
10 using hypertext transfer protocol or any successor protocol; and

11 (4)(A) "Item" means a material or performance that depicts or  
12 describes nudity, sexual conduct, sexual excitement, or sadomasochistic  
13 abuse, as those terms are defined in § 5-68-501.

14 (B) "Item" includes without limitation:

15 (i) A book, leaflet, pamphlet, magazine, booklet,  
16 picture, drawing, photograph, film, negative, slide, motion picture, figure,  
17 object, article, novelty device, recording, transcription, live or recorded  
18 telephone message, or other similar item whether tangible or intangible;

19 (ii) A performance, exhibition, transmission, or  
20 dissemination of any of the items listed in subdivision (a)(4)(B)(i) of this  
21 section; and

22 (iii) A live performance or exhibition that depicts  
23 nudity, sexual conduct, sexual excitement, or sadomasochistic abuse, as those  
24 terms are defined in § 5-68-501, to the public or an audience of one (1) or  
25 more persons.

26 (b) A person commits furnishing a harmful item to a minor if, knowing  
27 the character of the item involved, the person knowingly:

28 (1) Furnishes, presents, provides, makes available, gives,  
29 lends, shows, advertises, or distributes to a minor an item that is harmful  
30 to minors; or

31 (2) Transmits or sends to a person that he or she believes to be  
32 a minor by means of electronic mail, personal messaging, or any other direct  
33 internet communication an item that is harmful to minors when the person  
34 knows or believes at the time of the transmission that a minor in this state  
35 will receive the item.

36 (c)(1) Subdivision (b)(1) of this section does not apply to the

1 transmission or sending of items over the internet.

2 (2) Subdivision (b)(2) of this section does not apply to:

3 (A) Posting material on an internet website, bulletin  
4 board, or newsgroup; or

5 (B) Sending material via a mailing list, listserv, or  
6 other method of internet communication in which a message is sent to an  
7 internet address and then retransmitted to one (1) or more subscribers, that  
8 is not administered by the sender.

9 (d) Furnishing a harmful item to a minor is a Class A misdemeanor.

10  
11 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 5-68-308(c), concerning defenses to state  
12 standards that define and regulate obscenity, is amended to read as follows:

13 (c) No employee, director, or trustee of a bona fide ~~school~~, museum,  
14 ~~or public library~~, acting within the scope of his or her regular employment,  
15 is liable to prosecution for a violation of this subchapter for disseminating  
16 a writing, film, slide, drawing, or other visual reproduction that is *claimed*  
17 to be obscene.

18  
19 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 5-68-405 is amended to read as follows:  
20 5-68-405. Possession, sale, or distribution.

21 (a) ~~Any person that, with knowledge of its contents,~~ A person that  
22 knowingly sends or causes to be sent or brings or causes to be brought into  
23 this state for sale or commercial distribution, or in this state prepares,  
24 publishes, sells, exhibits, loans at a library, or commercially distributes,  
25 or gives away or offers to give away or has in the person's possession with  
26 ~~intent~~ the purpose to sell or commercially distribute or to exhibit or to  
27 give away, ~~any~~ obscene printed or written matter or material other than  
28 mailable matter, or any mailable matter known by the person to have been  
29 judicially found to be obscene under this subchapter, or that knowingly  
30 informs another of when, where, how, or from whom or by what means any of  
31 these things can be purchased or obtained, upon conviction is guilty of a  
32 Class D felony.

33 (b) ~~Any person that, with knowledge of its contents,~~ A person that  
34 knowingly has in the person's possession ~~any~~ obscene printed or written  
35 matter or material other than mailable matter, or any mailable matter known  
36 by that person to have been judicially found to be obscene under this

1 subchapter, upon conviction is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor.

2  
3 SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-25-105 is amended to read as follows:

4 6-25-105. Establishment of guidelines for selection, ~~removal~~  
5 relocation, and retention of materials.

6 (a) Media centers shall have written policies to establish guidelines  
7 for the selection, ~~removal~~ relocation, and retention of physical materials  
8 that are available to the public.

9 (b) The school district shall have a written policy for addressing  
10 challenged material that is physically present in the library and available  
11 to the public and meets the requirements stated in subsection (c) of this  
12 section.

13 (c) A written policy adopted by a school district under subsection (b)  
14 of this section shall provide, at a minimum, the following:

15 (1) A parent or guardian of a student affected by the material  
16 to be challenged or an employee of the school district may challenge the  
17 appropriateness of material available in the school district's media center;

18 (2) The school district shall decide if material being  
19 challenged shall remain available throughout the challenge process;

20 (3) Before a person can file a challenge, the person shall  
21 request a conference through the principal's office with a licensed media  
22 center employee;

23 (4) Before a conference under subdivision (c)(3) of this section  
24 occurs, the school district shall provide a copy of the following to a person  
25 who requests a conference under subdivision (c)(3) of this section:

26 (A) The written policy adopted by a school district under  
27 subsection (b) of this section; and

28 (B) A form or other method by which a person may request a  
29 reconsideration of the appropriateness of the material being challenged;

30 (5) After the conference requested under subdivision (c)(3) of  
31 this section occurs, if the person who requested the conference wants to  
32 formally challenge the appropriateness of the material that was the subject  
33 of the conference, the person shall complete and submit the request for  
34 reconsideration using the form or other method provided under subdivision  
35 (c)(4)(B) of this section to challenge the material that was the subject of  
36 the conference;

1 (6)(A) In conducting a review of material being challenged, the  
2 principal of the school district shall select a committee of licensed  
3 personnel.

4 (B) The principal or his or her designee shall be a member  
5 of the committee and may serve as the chair of the committee established  
6 under subdivision (c)(6)(A) of this section.

7 (C) At least one (1) member of the committee established  
8 under subdivision (c)(6)(A) of this section shall be a media specialist.

9 (D) The committee members who are not the principal or a  
10 media specialist shall be licensed personnel with curriculum knowledge  
11 appropriate for the material being challenged and be representative of  
12 diverse viewpoints;

13 (7)(A) The committee established under subdivision (c)(6)(A) of  
14 this section shall determine if the material being challenged meets the  
15 criteria of selection.

16 (B) Material being challenged:

17 (i) Shall not be withdrawn solely for the viewpoints  
18 expressed within the material; and

19 (ii) Shall be reviewed in its entirety and shall not  
20 have selected portions taken out of context;

21 (8) The school district shall convene a meeting of the committee  
22 established under subdivision (c)(6)(A) of this section after allowing a  
23 reasonable time for the committee members to adequately review the material  
24 being challenged and the request submitted under subdivision (c)(5) of this  
25 section by the person challenging the appropriateness of the material;

26 (9) The committee established under subdivision (c)(6)(A) of  
27 this section shall allow the person who submitted the request under  
28 subdivision (c)(5) of this section to present his or her request to the  
29 committee;

30 (10) After hearing from the person who submitted the request  
31 under subdivision (c)(5) of this section, the committee established under  
32 subdivision (c)(6)(A) of this section shall meet to discuss the material  
33 being challenged;

34 (11)(A) The committee established under subdivision (c)(6)(A) of  
35 this section shall vote to determine whether the material being challenged  
36 shall be relocated within the media center's collection to an area that is

1 not accessible to minors under the age of eighteen (18) years.

2 (B) A member of the committee established under  
3 subdivision (c)(6)(A) of this section who votes with the majority under  
4 subdivision (c)(11)(A) of this section shall write a summary of the reasons  
5 for the majority's decision.

6 (C) Notice of the committee's decision under subdivision  
7 (c)(11)(A) of this section and the summary prepared under subdivision  
8 (c)(11)(B) of this section shall be given by hand or by certified mail to the  
9 person who submitted the request under subdivision (c)(5) of this section;

10 (12)(A) If the committee established under subdivision (c)(6)(A)  
11 of this section decides not to relocate the material being challenged, the  
12 person who submitted the request under subdivision (c)(5) of this section may  
13 appeal the committee's decision to the board of directors for the school  
14 district by filing a written appeal to the superintendent within five (5)  
15 working days of the committee's decision or written receipt of the  
16 committee's decision.

17 (B)(i) If a person appeals the decision of a committee  
18 under this subdivision (c)(12), the superintendent shall present the material  
19 being challenged, the request submitted by the person under subdivision  
20 (c)(5) of this section, the committee's decision under subdivision (c)(11)(A)  
21 of this section, and the summary prepared under subdivision (c)(11)(B) of  
22 this section to the board of directors within fifteen (15) days of the  
23 committee's decision.

24 (ii) In addition to the information required to be  
25 provided under subdivision (c)(12)(B)(i) of this section, the superintendent  
26 may also include the administration's recommendation regarding the appeal  
27 submitted under this subdivision (c)(12).

28 (C)(i) The members of the board of directors shall review  
29 the information submitted to them under this subdivision (c)(12) and shall  
30 make a decision on the appeal within thirty (30) days of receiving the  
31 information.

32 (ii) The decision of a board of directors under  
33 subdivision (c)(12)(C)(i) of this section is final; and

34 (13) A meeting held regarding a challenge or an appeal submitted  
35 under a written policy adopted by a school district under subsection (b) of  
36 this section shall be a public meeting and the records submitted and

1 considered at a meeting shall be public records under the Freedom of  
2 Information Act of 1967, § 25-19-101 et seq.

3  
4 SECTION 5. Arkansas Code Title 13, Chapter 2, Subchapter 1, is amended  
5 to add an additional section to read as follows:

6 13-2-106. Establishment of guidelines for selection, relocation, and  
7 retention of materials.

8 (a) Each county or municipal library shall have a written policy to  
9 establish guidelines for the selection, relocation, and retention of physical  
10 materials that are available to the public.

11 (b) A county or municipal library shall have a written policy for  
12 addressing challenged material that is physically present in the library and  
13 available to the public and meets the requirements stated in subsection (c)  
14 of this section.

15 (c) A written policy adopted by a county or municipal library under  
16 subsection (b) of this section shall provide, at a minimum, the following:

17 (1) A person affected by the material to be challenged or an  
18 employee of the county or municipal library may challenge the appropriateness  
19 of material available in the county or municipal library;

20 (2) The county or municipal library shall decide if material  
21 being challenged shall remain available throughout the challenge process;

22 (3) Before a person can file a challenge, the person shall  
23 request a meeting with the librarian of the county or municipal library;

24 (4) Before a meeting under subdivision (c)(3) of this section  
25 occurs, the county or municipal library shall provide a copy of the following  
26 to a person who requests a meeting under subdivision (c)(3) of this section:

27 (A) The written policy adopted by the county or municipal  
28 library under subsection (b) of this section; and

29 (B) A form or other method by which a person may request a  
30 reconsideration of the appropriateness of the material being challenged;

31 (5) After the meeting requested under subdivision (c)(3) of this  
32 section occurs, if the person who requested the meeting wants to formally  
33 challenge the appropriateness of the material that was the subject of the  
34 meeting, the person shall complete and submit the request for reconsideration  
35 using the form or other method provided under subdivision (c)(4)(B) of this  
36 section to challenge the material that was the subject of the meeting;

1 (6)(A) In conducting a review of material being challenged, the  
2 librarian of the county or municipal library shall select a committee of  
3 library personnel.

4 (B) The librarian or his or her designee shall be a member  
5 of the committee and may serve as the chair of the committee established  
6 under subdivision (c)(6)(A) of this section.

7 (C) The committee members who are not the librarian shall  
8 have knowledge appropriate for the material being challenged and be  
9 representative of diverse viewpoints;

10 (7)(A) The committee established under subdivision (c)(6)(A) of  
11 this section shall determine if the material being challenged meets the  
12 criteria of selection.

13 (B) Material being challenged:

14 (i) Shall not be withdrawn solely for the viewpoints  
15 expressed within the material; and

16 (ii) Shall be reviewed in its entirety and shall not  
17 have selected portions taken out of context;

18 (8) The county or municipal library shall convene a meeting of  
19 the committee established under subdivision (c)(6)(A) of this section after  
20 allowing a reasonable time for the committee members to adequately review the  
21 material being challenged and the request submitted under subdivision (c)(5)  
22 of this section by the person challenging the appropriateness of the  
23 material;

24 (9) The committee established under subdivision (c)(6)(A) of  
25 this section shall allow the person who submitted the request under  
26 subdivision (c)(5) of this section to present his or her request to the  
27 committee;

28 (10) After hearing from the person who submitted the request  
29 under subdivision (c)(5) of this section, the committee established under  
30 subdivision (c)(6)(A) of this section shall meet to discuss the material  
31 being challenged;

32 (11)(A) The committee established under subdivision (c)(6)(A) of  
33 this section shall vote to determine whether the material being challenged  
34 shall be relocated within the library's collection to an area that is not  
35 accessible to minors under the age of eighteen (18) years.

36 (B) A member of the committee established under



1 subdivision (c)(6)(A) of this section who votes with the majority under  
2 subdivision (c)(11)(A) of this section shall write a summary of the reasons  
3 for the majority's decision.

4 (C) Notice of the committee's decision under subdivision  
5 (c)(11)(A) of this section and the summary prepared under subdivision  
6 (c)(11)(B) of this section shall be given by hand or by certified mail to the  
7 person who submitted the request under subdivision (c)(5) of this section;

8 (12)(A) If the committee established under subdivision (c)(6)(A)  
9 of this section decides not to relocate the material being challenged, the  
10 person who submitted the request under subdivision (c)(5) of this section may  
11 appeal the committee's decision to the governing body of the county or city  
12 by filing a written appeal to the executive head of the governing body of the  
13 county or city within five (5) working days of the committee's decision or  
14 written receipt of the committee's decision.

15 (B)(i) If a person appeals the decision of a committee  
16 under this subdivision (c)(12), the executive head of the county or city  
17 shall present the material being challenged, the request submitted by the  
18 person under subdivision (c)(5) of this section, the committee's decision  
19 under subdivision (c)(11)(A) of this section, and the summary prepared under  
20 subdivision (c)(11)(B) of this section to the governing body of the county or  
21 city within fifteen (15) days of the committee's decision.

22 (ii) In addition to the information required to be  
23 provided under subdivision (c)(12)(B)(i) of this section, the executive head  
24 of the county or city may also include his or her recommendation regarding  
25 the appeal submitted under this subdivision (c)(12).

26 (C)(i) The members of the governing body of the county or  
27 city shall review the information submitted to them under this subdivision  
28 (c)(12) and shall make a decision on the appeal within thirty (30) days of  
29 receiving the information.

30 (ii) The decision of the governing body of the  
31 county or city under subdivision (c)(12)(C)(i) of this section is final; and

32 (13) A meeting held regarding a challenge or an appeal submitted  
33 under a written policy adopted by a county or city library under subsection  
34 (b) of this section shall be a public meeting and the records submitted and  
35 considered at a meeting shall be public records under the Freedom of  
36 Information Act of 1967, § 25-19-101 et seq.

1 (d) As used in this section:

2 (1) "Executive head of the county or city" means:

3 (A) For a county library, the executive head of the  
4 county;

5 (B) For a city library, the executive head of the city;  
6 and

7 (C) For a library that is funded by both a county and a  
8 city, the executive head of the county or city that provides the majority of  
9 the funding for the library; and

10 (2) "Governing body of the county or city" means:

11 (A) For a county library, the county;

12 (B) For a city library, the city; and

13 (C) For a library that is funded by both a county and a  
14 city, the county or city that provides the majority of the funding for the  
15 library.

16  
17 SECTION 6. Arkansas Code § 13-2-704 is amended to read as follows:

18 13-2-704. Disclosure permitted.

19 (a) A library may disclose personally identifiable information  
20 concerning any patron to:

21 (1) The patron;

22 (2) Any person with the informed, written consent of the patron;

23 (3) A law enforcement agency or civil court, under a search  
24 warrant; or

25 (4) Any person, including without limitation the patron, who has  
26 received an automated telephone notification or other electronic  
27 communication for overdue materials or reserve materials if the person making  
28 the request can verify the telephone number or email address to which the  
29 notice was sent.

30 (b) A library may disclose confidential library records to:

31 (1) The patron; and

32 (2) The parent or legal guardian of a patron who is younger than  
33 eighteen (18) years of age.

34  
35 /s/D. Sullivan

36 APPROVED: 3/30/23