# Supreme Court to hear Maryland dispute over LGBTQ-themed children’s books in schools



A legal dispute centering on the inclusion of LGBTQ-themed children's books in a Maryland school district's curriculum is set to be heard by the US Supreme Court on Tuesday, highlighting ongoing national debates over education, religious freedom, and LGBTQ representation.

The case arises in Montgomery County, a diverse suburban area in Maryland, where parents have objected to the use of five children's books featuring LGBTQ characters in elementary school classes catering to students from kindergarten through the fifth grade. Among the books is "Prince and Knight," a story in which a prince rescues a knight from danger and the two subsequently fall in love. Other titles under scrutiny include "Uncle Bobby’s Wedding," which explores the feelings of a niece whose uncle marries a man, "Love, Violet," addressing a girl’s feelings about giving a valentine to another girl, "Born Ready," which tells the story of a transgender boy revealing his gender identity, and "Intersection Allies," which depicts nine characters of various backgrounds, including a gender-fluid individual.

Parents opposing the curriculum changes, citing their religious beliefs, have sought to withdraw their children from classes involving these books. They argue that public schools should not compel students to engage with material that conflicts with their faith. The controversy intensified after the Montgomery County Public Schools system reversed its original policy that permitted parents to opt their children out of such instruction.

Billy Moges, a member of the parents' advocacy group Kids First formed in response to the curriculum additions, told The Independent, "It’s labeled as a language arts, you know, reading and writing program, but the content of the material is very sexual. It is teaching human sexuality and is confusing kids, and parents are not comfortable having their children exposed to these things at such an early age." Moges also shared that she withdrew her three daughters, aged 6, 8, and 10, from public schools in favour of homeschooling and eventually private Christian education following the controversy.

During school board hearings, dozens of parents testified about their obligation to uphold their religious convictions by shielding young children from lessons addressing gender and sexuality issues. The school district, however, has maintained that the books in question are not part of sex education but rather "tell everyday tales of characters who experience adventure, confront new emotions, and struggle to make themselves heard," akin to themes found in classic literature such as Snow White and Cinderella. In legal documents filed with the court, school lawyers emphasised that the books were selected "in order to better represent all Montgomery County families" and teachers are prohibited from using them to pressure students to alter or renounce their religious beliefs.

The school system’s decision to eliminate the opt-out option was explained as a response to the logistical challenges and disruption it caused when parents sought to withdraw their children. The district declined to provide further comment on the ongoing litigation.

This case comes at a time when the conservative-leaning Supreme Court has demonstrated a pattern of rulings supportive of religious freedom claims, making the outcome uncertain and closely watched by both supporters and opponents of the curriculum.

Advocacy groups such as PEN America, which monitors censorship and book bans across the country, filed court papers criticising the parents' legal challenge as "a constitutionally suspect book ban by another name." Tasslyn Magnusson, senior adviser for PEN America’s Freedom to Read programme, said, "I really hope people read these books. They’re just lovely examples of experiences that kids have in school and they’re perfectly fine storybooks to have as part of an educational curriculum."

One of the books that faced a similar fate is "My Rainbow," co-written by Delaware state representative DeShanna Neal and her daughter Trinity. The book depicts Trinity’s wish for long hair as a transgender girl and her mother’s act of knitting a rainbow wig. Neal, who has seen the book pulled from library shelves in several states, said, "School is a place to learn about why the world is different and how it’s different. What I had hoped would come out of this book was, listen to your children. They know their own bodies."

As the Supreme Court prepares to deliberate, the case underscores the tensions between educational inclusivity efforts and religious objections, with implications for similar disputes nationwide.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://becketfund.org/media/breaking-supreme-court-to-decide-if-parents-can-opt-kids-out-of-pride-storybooks/> - This URL corroborates the core legal dispute about Montgomery County removing parental opt-outs for LGBTQ-themed storybooks in elementary schools, and the Supreme Court's role in deciding this issue.
* <https://foxbaltimore.com/news/local/maryland-ag-advocates-against-parents-supreme-court> - This source confirms that Maryland Attorney General Anthony Brown defended the policy preventing opt-outs from LGBTQ books in the Montgomery County school curriculum and highlights specific books such as 'Born Ready' included in the curriculum.
* <https://www.scotusblog.com/2025/01/justices-take-up-maryland-parents-challenge-to-lgbtq-books-in-schools/> - This article supports information about the Supreme Court granting review of the case involving Maryland parents challenging the mandatory inclusion of LGBTQ-themed books and describes the background of the books used in the curriculum.
* <https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/investigations/supreme-court-montgomery-county-board-of-education-lgbtq-books-becket-religious-liberty-for-all-coalition-for-inclusive-schools-and-communities/65-c1475a55-ab09-4dcb-8993-dba9ae5342b0> - This link confirms the lawsuit filed by parents seeking an opt-out right for their children from LGBTQ+ inclusive books and the Supreme Court's upcoming hearing on the matter.
* <https://pen.org/lgbtq-inclusive-childrens-books-are-constitutional/> - While not from the initial results, PEN America publicly criticized challenges like the Maryland case as unconstitutional book bans and advocates for LGBTQ-inclusive children's literature in schools, supporting the article's mention of PEN America’s opposition.