

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

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Sonja Shaw
President
Chino Valley USD Board of Education
5130 Riverside Dr
Chino, CA 91710

Re: Removal of the bible from Chino Valley USD

Dear President Shaw and Board of Education Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) to request that the bible be removed from Chino Valley USD's school libraries based on its sexually obscene content. As you will recall, FFRF is a national nonprofit organization with more than 40,000 members across the country, including more than 5,000 members and two local chapters in California. Our purposes are to protect the constitutional principle of separation between state and church, and to educate the public on matters relating to nontheism.

A concerned District resident has reported that they recently requested that you remove the bible from District libraries and classrooms based on a new policy recently enacted by the Board seeking to remove "sexually obscene materials" from the District's schools.¹

We are writing to support that local community member and request that the District either remove the bible based on the criterion of "sexually obscene materials" it has established in its new policy, or do away with the policy altogether. The District cannot ban only some "sexually obscene" books while allowing others, like the bible, because it supports their viewpoint.

In the bible, rape is not only described, but the victims are forced to marry their rapists.² One bible story tells of a prostitute who "lusted after her lovers, whose genitals were like those of donkeys and whose emission was like that of horses," who "longed for the lewdness of your youth, when . . . [her] bosom was caressed and your young breasts fondled."³ This same story speaks about sex toys: you "took the fine jewelry I gave you, the jewelry made of my gold and silver, and you made for yourself male idols and engaged in prostitution with them."⁴ Another book of the bible has a character who prays, "may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever

¹ <https://ktla.com/news/local-news/chino-valley-school-board-enacts-controversial-book-ban-policy/>

² Deuteronomy 22:28–29.

³ Ezekiel 23:20–21.

⁴ Ezekiel 16:17.

be intoxicated with her love.”⁵ In yet another bible story, a future husband purchases a wife by killing 200 of her fathers’ enemies, mutilating their corpses, and bringing back their foreskins as a dowry.⁶ Another sordid and preposterous story that defames incest victims recounts the exploits of two daughters who, having just witnessed a genocide and the murder of their mother by a pyromaniacal god, supposedly got their father drunk and seduced him in order to bear his children.⁷ Yet another book describes sperm, intercourse, menstruation, homosexuality, bestiality, adultery and whores.⁸ Another depicts a holy man impaling a woman through her belly and describes in loving detail how to steal and rape virgins as war booty.⁹ Yet another tale tells how a woman has her hand cut off for touching a man’s penis.¹⁰ In other passages, women’s skirts are lifted over their face so their nakedness and shame can be exposed to all.¹¹ Another tale describes a man touching a woman’s “hole of the door” and how her “bowels were moved for him.”¹²

These and many more unpalatable and sexually explicit stories are found in the various books of the bible. Our educational association has published a brochure, *An X-Rated Book: Sex & Obscenity In the Bible*, which exposes nearly 150 bible verses displaying a “pornographic view of sex and women, lewdness, depravity and sexual violence often ordered or countenanced by the biblical deity.” It can be read for free on our website.¹³

FFRF Co-President Dan Barker has written an entire book on the evils of the bible, *GOD: The Most Unpleasant Character in All Fiction*. Chapters document “divinely” ordered genocide, infanticide and filicide, among many other atrocities, as well as the biblical deity’s racism, sexism, slavemongering and sadomasochism. An interactive companion website details all of this and more.¹⁴ These verses are one reason why FFRF makes available bible warning labels to place on hotel bibles saying, “Warning: Literal belief in this book may endanger your health and life.”¹⁵

It is important to note that removal of the bible would not constitute hostility toward Christianity or religion. The District must hold religious texts to the same standards it holds all other library books, review them, and, if they contain the same sexually explicit content as the bible, must also remove them under the District’s new policy. Removing the bible for its obscenity based on neutral criteria is not religious discrimination.

FFRF advocates, above all, for freedom of thought. We oppose the concept of banning books from school libraries. We believe that there is no true freedom of thought, conscience or even religion, unless our government and its public schools are free from religion and its control over thought. We are deeply familiar with the haunting history of censorship—from the Catholic

⁵ Proverbs 5:19.

⁶ 1 Samuel 18:27.

⁷ Genesis 19.

⁸ Leviticus.

⁹ Numbers.

¹⁰ Deuteronomy 25:11–12.

¹¹ Nahum 3:5.

¹² Song of Solomon 5:4.

¹³ Available at ffrf.org/component/k2/item/23733-an-x-rated-book-sex-obscenity-in-the-bible.

¹⁴ Available at unpleasant.ffrf.org/.

¹⁵ Available at ffrf.org/shop/accessories/bumper-stickers-15/bible-warning-labels-skull-crossbones-78-detail.

Church's Index Librorum Prohibitorum, to the Comstock laws, to the Nazi book burnings, the attacks on authors such as Charles Darwin and Salman Rushdie, and the murders of Bangladeshi bloggers such as Avijit Roy. Heinrich Heine famously observed, "Where they burn books, they will end in burning human beings." History never looks kindly on book censors and burners.

The best solution is to leave a diversity of viewpoints in school libraries, and trust students to explore complex topics themselves by not banning books from school libraries. However, so long as the District is choosing to remove books containing sexual content, the bible may not be given special treatment and must be removed too.

The "inappropriate" sections of the majority of books targeted by groups like "Moms for Liberty" are typically minor parts of books that have literary value. Reading takes time, and understanding books critically takes even more thought. Those who propose book bans target gullible audiences with selective material. They fear free inquiry and independence of thought. Much of the book banning impetus is manufactured, with pre-made lists of books and quotes circulated by self-righteous grandstanders who are hostile to critical thinking. In short, the current wave of book banning is not about protecting children, it is about discouraging thought.

We are disturbed that the District has enacted a policy to remove books from school libraries based on content taken out of context for political purposes. Because the District has established a removal policy that clearly encompasses the sexually obscene materials contained in the bible, so long as you plan to ban other books, you must be even-handed about your purge and immediately remove the bible as well. If you find that the vast amount of sexually obscene material in the bible does not warrant its removal from district schools, then this same lower standard must be applied to all books with similar content. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Annie Laurie Gaylor & Dan Barker
Co-Presidents