



## **The Attack on Information: SC Efforts to Protect Schools & Libraries**

### **March 22, 2023 Webinar Follow-Up**

We're glad you registered for our webinar on March 22, 2023. We invite you to join our efforts to empower voters and defend democracy! Here's the follow-up information we promised you.

#### **How you can help...**

##### **Joshua Malkin**

Legislative and Policy Advocate, Legal Fellow, ACLU of South Carolina, [jmalkin@aclusc.org](mailto:jmalkin@aclusc.org)

It was great to be with everyone on Wednesday! I'd like to share one additional suggestion for how you can take a stand against censorship.

The majority of South Carolinians are likely unaware of the radical attacks on information, educators, and students. Once informed, many will likely see these efforts for the dangerous attempts at erasure that they are, and join the fight.

Others may be aware of the attacks and need more information to form their opinion. Book banners are working actively to show folks how "dangerous" books can be. These same people need to be hearing from us, South Carolinians who believe it is imperative for our students to have access to diverse and inclusive curriculum and literature.

Please take the time to let your friends and neighbors know that students' freedom to access information is under relentless attack. For sample talking points, visit <https://my.lwv.org/south-carolina-state/freedom-read-sc-coalition>. Thank you for taking a stand!

#### **Privatizing schools as a hidden agenda....**

##### **Janelle L. Rivers, Ph.D.**

Education Advocacy Specialist, League of Women Voters of South Carolina, [rivers12@bellsouth.net](mailto:rivers12@bellsouth.net)

The big picture is becoming clearer. Dark-money funders seek to privatize the schools. Coordinated culture-war attacks on multiple fronts include:

- Attempts to ban books and censor content in public libraries and school libraries
- Attempts to restrict curriculum and censor historical content in public schools
- Attempts to intimidate teachers and school administrators who support inclusivity
- Attempts to divert public funds to pay for a variety of expenses related to private schools
- Attempts to impose the religious views of a vocal and well-organized minority on those who do not share their views

All of these tactics have potential to inflict serious long-term damage on public schools. Do you see a connection between the culture-war tactics against teachers and school districts and the fact that there are three bills in play in the General Assembly that seek to divert public funds to private schools?

South Carolina's public schools have made outstanding progress in my lifetime. That fact that is hidden by rankings in the popular media, which often include factors that are within the control of the General Assembly.

Assessment experts will tell you that the only valid way to compare student achievement from state to state is via the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). If you check the [NAEP results for 2022](#), you'll see that South Carolina ranks near the national average for fourth graders, while South Carolina's eighth -grade students didn't perform as well. Here's the link to that data:

There's always a strong correlation between family income and student achievement. The variability among schools within South Carolina is clear proof of that income-achievement relationship. I invite you to study that relationship by [examining the school and district report card results](#) .

## **Below is the promised list of resources from our webinar.**

League of Women Voters of South Carolina home page: [lwwsc.org](http://lwwsc.org)

[Freedom to Read SC Coalition](#) Page:

[Talking points](#) for opposing book bans:

[Merchants of Deception: Parent Props and Their Funders](#) by Maurice T. Cunningham.

### **H.3728**

[Link to H.3728 "South Carolina Transparency and Integrity in Education Act"](#)

[Link to League's Senate testimony](#) re H.3728:

### **LWVSC Education Advocacy resources**

Go to [LWVSC.org](http://LWVSC.org) and explore:

Click **Advocacy** at the top. Look down the left side of the page and

click **Legislative Advocacy** and then

click **Human Rights, Services**

You'll find

- a list of bills that the League is following.
- the League's position on relevant issues
- copies of the League's testimony on various bills
- a link to the Freedom to Read page that the League is hosting for the Freedom to Read SC Coalition