



LIBRARIES

Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin

On June 17, Derrick Van Orden, Republican congressional candidate, loudly complained about a Pride display in the children's department and threatened a seventeen-year-old library worker at the Prairie du Chien Memorial Library.

Van Orden insisted that taxpayers shouldn't have to see lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) books.

Van Orden was apparently particularly enraged about *A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo*, a picture book about same-sex rabbit marriage. Van Orden submitted a written complaint about the book in which he stated it was "skewing young people to think Republicans are not inclusive."

Kerrigan Trautsch said Van Orden's "voice was loud, he was aggressive, he had his finger jabbing into [*Marlon Bundo*] constantly." She said he demanded to know who set up the display so he could "teach them a lesson." Trautsch was too frightened to admit she set it up.

She tried to suggest adult LGBTQIA+ books and Van Orden told her "Hush, you don't have a voice. You don't have a voice."

"He was full-on shouting and he kept aggressively shoving the books around," Trautsch said. Van Orden called the displayed books "disgusting" then checked out all of them aside from one that another patron was reading.

When she got home, Trautsch told her parents she no longer felt safe coming to work.

After returning the books, Van Orden issued a statement in which he said, "It is 2021 and this should not have to be stated but there are people who continue to divide us as Americans for political purposes."

Van Orden unsuccessfully ran for a seat in Wisconsin's 3rd Congressional District in 2020, despite President Trump's endorsement. He was present at the January 6 insurrection, but insists he did not participate in the violence. He has announced he intends to run again in 2022.

Trautsch, who is now 18, said Van Orden "cannot handle the new generation of voters coming in by telling them to shush, that we don't have a voice. I want him to know: I can vote now."

Reported in: *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, August 24, 2021; *La Crosse Tribune*, August 22, 2021.

UNIVERSITIES Florida

The constitutionality of Florida's law, which requires a survey of the beliefs and perspectives of college and university professors and students, is being challenged by a lawsuit brought by United Faculty of Florida (UFF), the non-profit March for Our Lives Action Fund, four students, four professors, and a lecturer.

The UFF issued a statement calling HB 233 a "political stunt" undermining free speech, assembly, and privacy.

HB 233 requires state universities and colleges to conduct an annual assessment of "intellectual freedom and diversity of perspectives."

When Governor Ron DeSantis announced the bill, he threatened to defund universities found to be "indoctrinating" students with "state ideology," raising concerns that it was designed to control discourse on college campuses.

The lawsuit notes that "the survey provisions neither explain or put any limitations on how the governor, Florida legislature, or boards might use the results of the survey."

Attorneys for the plaintiffs assert the law was ideologically driven.

The lawsuit argues that, "While it may purport to protect and advance intellectual freedom and viewpoint diversity on Florida's public college and university campuses, [the law's] reality—and its intention—is the exact opposite."

HB 233 allows students to record lectures without their professors' consent, to be used as evidence in complaints to the Board of Education or in civil proceedings.

"It was passed with the intent to suppress liberal and progressive views and associations . . . by creating a hostile environment for those views on virtually every level, up to and including sanctioning vindictive litigation and targeting them for harassment and budget cuts," states the lawsuit.

The lawsuit asserts HB 233 unlawfully targets and discriminates based on viewpoint "with the goal of chilling some and compelling other speech, as well as chilling the freedom to associate with groups that share the viewpoints that HB 233 is designed to suppress."

"Without regard for the First Amendment, the law permits the state to collect the private political beliefs of students and compels faculty both to espouse and promote views they do not share and carefully consider whether and how to discuss views that they do," states the lawsuit.

The Republican-controlled legislature passed the bill earlier this year. It went into effect on July 1.

(See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy, v.6 iss.3: Is it Legal?: Universities*)

Reported in: *Florida News Times*, August 6, 2021; *WTSP*, August 4, 2021; *WLRN*, August 5, 2021.