

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4319

To require an independent review process for the prohibition of books at
Bureau of Prisons facilities, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 16 (legislative day, APRIL 14), 2026

Mr. SCHIFF (for himself, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. PADILLA) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To require an independent review process for the prohibition
of books at Bureau of Prisons facilities, and for other
purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Rehabilitation
5 Through Reading Act of 2026”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

8 (1) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means
9 the Director of the Bureau of Prisons.

1 (2) PROFESSIONAL LIBRARIAN.—The term
2 “professional librarian” means a librarian who has
3 a master’s degree from a program accredited by the
4 American Library Association.

5 **SEC. 3. BANNED BOOKS IN PRISONS.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the
7 date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall establish
8 a Publication Review Committee for the purpose of ap-
9 proving or disapproving the availability of books at Bureau
10 of Prisons facilities.

11 (b) MEMBERS.—The Publication Review Committee
12 shall consist of not fewer than 5 members, including the
13 Ombudsman established under section 2 of the Federal
14 Prison Oversight Act (Public Law 118–71), 1 individual
15 who is a professional librarian employed by the Bureau
16 of Prisons, 1 individual in the custody of the Bureau of
17 Prisons, and 1 individual with knowledge or expertise in
18 First Amendment law.

19 (c) PROCEDURES.—

20 (1) PROHIBITING A BOOK.—Following the date
21 of the establishment of the Publication Review Com-
22 mittee, the Director may only prohibit a book at Bu-
23 reau of Prisons facilities if—

24 (A) the Director submits a request in writ-
25 ing to the Publication Review Committee to ap-

1 prove such prohibition, including a detailed ex-
2 planation of the reason for prohibiting the book;
3 and

4 (B) the Publication Review Committee ap-
5 proves such request.

6 (2) APPEAL OF A PROHIBITED BOOK.—An indi-
7 vidual in the custody of the Bureau of Prisons may
8 submit to the Publication Review Committee an ap-
9 peal to reverse the prohibition of a book in Bureau
10 of Prisons facilities.

11 (3) DETERMINATIONS.—

12 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days
13 after the date on which a request or appeal is
14 submitted to the Publication Review Committee
15 under paragraph (1) or (2), as applicable, the
16 Publication Review Committee shall issue a
17 final determination in writing approving or dis-
18 approving the availability of the book at Bureau
19 of Prisons facilities in accordance with subpara-
20 graph (B).

21 (B) REASON FOR PROHIBITING A BOOK.—

22 (i) IN GENERAL.—A book may not be
23 prohibited in order to eliminate a
24 disfavored viewpoint or disfavored content.

1 (ii) CONSIDERATIONS.—In deter-
 2 mining whether the prohibition of a book is
 3 based on a disfavored viewpoint or
 4 disfavored content, the Publication Review
 5 Committee shall determine whether the
 6 prohibition is substantially motivated by
 7 the viewpoint of the book, including if the
 8 book is deemed unpopular or repugnant, or
 9 otherwise violates the rights of incarcer-
 10 ated individuals to access information.

11 (C) DISCRETION.—Except as provided in
 12 subparagraph (B), a determination issued by
 13 the Publication Review Committee shall be at
 14 the discretion of the Publication Review Com-
 15 mittee and shall not require approval from the
 16 Director.

17 (4) MAINTAINING ACCESS TO A BOOK.—If an
 18 appeal is filed under paragraph (2) prior to the re-
 19 moval of the book from any library of any Bureau
 20 of Prisons facility, the book shall not be removed
 21 until the Publication Review Committee has made a
 22 final determination regarding the appeal.

23 **SEC. 4. ANNUAL REPORTING REQUIREMENT.**

24 Not later than 30 days after the end of each fiscal
 25 year following the date of enactment of this Act, the Direc-

1 tor shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the
2 Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House
3 of Representatives an annual report detailing any books
4 that were prohibited during the preceding fiscal year, in-
5 cluding a summary of each appeal filed pursuant to sec-
6 tion 3(c)(2) and the status and final outcome, as applica-
7 ble, of each appeal.

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