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(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R.

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

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. CLEAVER introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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# 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:

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

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

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

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

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

21          (c) PROCEDURES.—

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

1 (A) the Director submits a request in writ-  
2 ing to the Publication Review Committee to ap-  
3 prove such prohibition, including a detailed ex-  
4 planation of the reason for prohibiting the book;  
5 and

6 (B) the Publication Review Committee ap-  
7 proves such request.

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

13 (3) DETERMINATIONS.—

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

23 (B) REASON FOR PROHIBITING A BOOK.—

1 (i) IN GENERAL.—A book may not be  
2 prohibited in order to eliminate a  
3 disfavored viewpoint or disfavored content.

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

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

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

1 **SEC. 4. ANNUAL REPORTING REQUIREMENT.**

2 Not later than 30 days after the end of each fiscal  
3 year following the date of enactment of this Act, the Direc-  
4 tor shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the  
5 Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House  
6 of Representatives an annual report detailing any books  
7 that were prohibited during the preceding fiscal year, in-  
8 cluding a summary of each appeal filed pursuant to sec-  
9 tion 3(c)(2) and the status and final outcome, as applica-  
10 ble, of each appeal.