

Students Protest Over Senate Pushing Pornographic Lesbian Memoir Out of Public Universities

The South Carolina Senate on Tuesday eliminated punitive budget cuts of almost \$70,000 against two public universities over assignments of gay-themed literature but required them to instead use the funds to teach the United States Constitution.

The Republican-controlled state House voted in March to cut the budgets of the College of Charleston over its assignment of *Fun Home*, a lesbian memoir, to incoming freshmen. The University of South Carolina-Upstate in Spartanburg was penalized for its inclusion of *Out Loud: The Best of Rainbow Radio*.

Legislators called *Fun Home*, a best-seller that was nominated for a National Book Critics Circle Award, "pornographic."

Critics said the measure amounted to censorship and legislative meddling in academic affairs. Students at the College of Charleston protested with marches, sit-ins and calls to lawmakers.

The Senate's debate on the punitive budget cuts and academic freedom took up almost a week.

The latest measure approved by the Senate requires the colleges to offer an alternative book to students who object to an assignment on grounds of "religious, moral or cultural belief." It requires them to use \$70,000 in funding to teach "the study of and devotion to American institutions and ideals," including the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence and the Federalist papers.

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