

April 3, 2025

Dear House Government Committee Clerk Steven Sepe:

We, the undersigned authors and illustrators, are writing to support the Freedom to Read Act H5726. We urge you to protect the freedom to read for all people.

As authors and illustrators, our books are created with great care and intentionality, and we recognize the responsibility we have to our readers. We are deeply concerned for the families, librarians, and communities who suffer when the freedom to read is challenged and taken away. A book may not be for every reader, but—as we know from the many letters we receive from our readers—a single book can matter deeply to an individual.

Authors Against Book Bans is in support of this bill due to its protections for creators, publishers, librarians, and teachers. We believe the private right of action is important, because it provides the ability to enforce the law without expense to the state. The banning efforts escalating across the nation particularly target BIPOC and LGBTQ+ stories; they seek to erase history and silence the voices that speak truthfully about essential human experiences. When books are removed or flagged as inappropriate, it sends the message that the people in them are somehow inappropriate. It is a dehumanizing form of erasure. Every reader deserves to see themselves and their families positively represented in the books in their libraries and institutions of higher learning. Studies show that diverse books build empathy and reduce prejudice, creating a more compassionate world for us all. As hate crimes spike across the U.S., we need these books now more than ever. Moreover, as today's young people grapple with mental health challenges, these books can literally be a lifeline, encouraging readers to seek help from their families and communities.

For centuries, libraries have provided equal access to a wealth of knowledge and ideas for all members of their communities. When pro-censorship groups seek to overwhelm or manipulate these systems, seeking to advance their own political agendas or personal beliefs by censoring books, they create an atmosphere of fear and oppression and infringe on our most bedrock freedoms—freedom of ideas, of expression, of thought. The freedom to read is essential to ensuring our communities thrive.

Books have immense power to build compassion, overcome prejudice, and enrich lives—but they must stay on the shelves to do so. We call on the Rhode Island House Committee to pass the Freedom to Read Act H5726.

Signed,

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Samira Ahmed
Gayle Forman

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Ann Zhao
Anna E. Jordan
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Anne Ursu
Anne Wynter
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Ansel Elkins
April Henry
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Bethany Brookshire
Bethany Hegedus
Bharti Kirchner
Bianca Mabute-Louie
Booki Vivat
Breanna Carzoo
Brian Katcher
Brigit Young
Britt Hawthorne
Brittany Parry
Bruce Coville
C.C. Harrington
C.E. Thornton
Caela Carter
Carey Blankenship-Kramer
Carmen Oliver
Carol Cassella
Caroline Carlson
Caroline Kusin Pritchard
Caroline Leavitt
Caroline McAlister
Carrie Finison

Carrie Firestone
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Cat Winters
Cátia Chien
Cece Bell
Chamisa Kellogg
Charles de Lint
Charlie Jane Anders
Charlie Lovett
Charlotte Agell
Charlotte Sullivan Wild
Charly Palmer
Cheryl Blackford
Cheryl Rainfield
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Christina Lauren
Christina Soontornvat
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Clay Carmichael
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Cory Putman Oakes
Crystal Hana Kim
Crystal Maldonado
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Cynthia Levinson
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Dan Gemeinhart
Dan Richards
Dana Alison Levy
Dana J. Sullivan

Daniel Handler (aka Lemony Snicket)
Danielle Davis
Danielle Joseph
Danielle Pieratti
Darcey Rosenblatt
Darcey Steinke
Darlene Beck Jacobson
Dashka Slater
David Arnold
David B. Williams
David DeGrand
David Laskin
David Lasky
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David Shannon
Debbi Michiko Florence
Debbie Ridpath Ohi
Debbie Vilardi
Deborah Bruss
Deborah Freedman
Deborah Heiligman
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Derek Milman
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Deva Fagan
Devon Holzwarth
Diana López
Diana Ma
Diane Telgen
Dianne White
Dominique Dickey
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Donalyn Miller
Donna Barba Higuera
Donna Gephart
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EF Dodd
Eileen Heyes
Elana K. Arnold
Eliot Schrefer

Elizabeth Eulberg
Elizabeth Kilcoyne
Elizabeth Winthrop
Ella Schwartz
Ellen Hopkins
Ellen Miles
Ellen Oh
Emeline Lee
Emilee Moore
Emily Barth Isler
Emily Deibert
Emily Dove Barton
Emma Reynolds
Emma Straub
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Erica Ivy Rodgers
Erica S. Perl
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Erin Thomas
Evan Griffith
Federico Erebia
Fin Leary
Fiona Cook
Fleur Bradley
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Gabi Snyder
Gabriella Gamez
Gareth Hinds
Gayleen Rabakukk
Gemma Hartley
Gennifer Choldenko
Ginger Park
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Gordon Korman
Greg Howard
H.M. Bouwman
Helene Dunbar
Hilary Reyy
Holly Green
Holly Schindler
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J. Anderson Coats
J.S. Park
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Jacqueline K. Ogburn
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Jessica Spotswood
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