

Steven Sepe

From: Sarah Baker <sarahbaker@scbwi.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 3, 2025 3:44 AM
To: Rep. Blazejewski, Christopher R.; Rep. Shekarchi, K Joseph; House State Government and Elections Committee
Subject: Freedom to Read Act H5726

The Society for Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) lends its support to Freedom to Read Act H5726). We especially commend its protections for book creators, including authors, illustrators, editors and publishers.

The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI), a 501c3 nonprofit, is the preeminent membership organization for children's book creators. We are a community of writers, illustrators, translators, publishers, librarians, advocates, and other industry professionals working to establish a more imaginative and inclusive world through the power of children's literature. Our mission is to support the creation of an abundance of quality children's books, so that young people everywhere have the books they need and deserve.

By harnessing the collective power of this diverse community, our mission is to make the children's publishing industry more inclusive and elevate the art of children's literature.

Recent censorship of children's literature in the United States has disproportionately targeted work created by authors and illustrators who belong to historically marginalized communities that have long fought for equal representation in this field: authors who are Black, indigenous, persons of color, or belong to religious minority groups or self-identify as part of the LGBTQ2+ community. This goes against our commitment to breaking down barriers and opening doors for everyone with a story to tell. We denounce and oppose censorship attempts that seek to exclude authors from certain communities and erase their stories. Censorship threatens every creative individual who is seeking to produce high-quality literature for young people.

We request you to pass Freedom to Read Act H5726, retaining all protections for writers and illustrators of all identities who produce excellent children's books.

Thank you.
Sincerely,
Sarah Baker
SCBWI