

## **Over 1,300 Children's and YA Authors Condemn Book Banning**

May 17, 2022

Rep. Jamie Raskin and Rep. Nancy Mace  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Oversight and Reform  
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Raskin and Mace,

We, the undersigned, authors and illustrators of books for children and teens, condemn the efforts by organized groups to purge books from our nation's schools. Our concern is not for the books themselves, but for the children, families, and communities who are caught in the crosshairs of these campaigns.

This current wave of book suppression follows hard-won gains made by authors whose voices have long been underrepresented in publishing. Just ten years ago, less than seven percent of children's books featured characters who were Black, Indigenous, or people of color (source: Cooperative Children's Book Center). Representation is finally increasing thanks to the work of groups like We Need Diverse Books. The current banning efforts are part of a strong and purposeful backlash against books written by BIPOC authors. Books with characters who are LGBTQIA+ have been vehemently targeted and frequently misrepresented.

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 schools. These books are important for *all* children. Reading stories that reflect the diversity of our world builds empathy and respect for everyone's humanity. At a time when our country is experiencing an alarming rise in hate crimes, we should be searching for ways to increase empathy and compassion at every turn.

A particularly insidious feature of the current attacks is the flood of accusations that anyone who seeks to give readers access to diverse books is a "groomer," "radical," or "pedophile." These charges are abhorrent and without merit, and they have been leveled against not only authors, but against teachers and librarians. We strongly condemn this slander against our colleagues and our nation's educators.

A book may not be for every student, but—as we know from the many letters we receive from young readers—a single book can matter deeply to an individual student. Nearly all campuses have an existing system to handle a parent's concern with their own child's reading material. Pro-censorship groups seek to overwhelm these systems by pressuring schools to pull entire lists of books from shelves "for review." Some extremists have intimidated authors, educators, and school board members online and even threatened them with violence. This has created an atmosphere of fear that has led to "soft censorship" in many districts. Books are quietly removed or never purchased at all. Authors are never invited to speak, for fear of drawing the wrath of these groups.

Libraries are bastions of the First Amendment. They provide equal access to a wealth of knowledge and ideas for all public school students. When individuals and organizations seek to advance their own political agendas or personal beliefs by censoring books, they infringe upon students' constitutional rights.

We call upon Congress, statehouses, and school boards to reject the political manipulation of our schools, to uphold the values of freedom and equality promised in the Constitution, and to protect the rights of all young people to access the books they need and deserve.

Signed,

Judy Blume	Rick Riordan	Angie Thomas
Lois Lowry	Jacqueline Woodson	Dave Pilkey
Christina Soontornvat	Cynthia Leitich Smith	Kate DiCamillo
Ellen Oh	Mo Willems	Kwame Alexander
Phil Bildner	Jason Reynolds	Avi
Alex London	Jeff Kinney	Jerry Craft
Dhonielle Clayton	John Green	Dan Santat
Gordon Korman	Raina Telgemeier	Hope Larson
Karina Yan Glaser	Tiffany D. Jackson	Varian Johnson
James Ponti	Mayra Cuevas	Romina Garber
Minh Lê	Rebecca Stead	Marianna Baer
Linda Sue Park	Molly Idle	Padma Venkatraman
Nic Stone	Bill Konigsberg	Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich
Hena Khan	Joy McCullough	Julie Murphy
Katherine Paterson	Liz Garton Scanlon	Denise K. Lajimodiere
Sarah Mlynowski	Elizabeth Eulberg	Laurie Devore
Meg Medina	Adele Griffin	Soman Chainani
Gregory Maguire	Laurel Snyder	Jamie Lee Curtis
Stuart Gibbs	Susan Campbell Bartoletti	Mac Barnett
Julie Buxbaum	Debbie Ridpath Ohi	Megan Frazer Blakemore
KA Holt	Matt de la Peña	Malinda Lo
Juana Martinez-Neal	Cynthia Levinson	Alex Segura
Nikki Grimes	Bethany Hegedus	Kelly Yang
Max Brallier	Elana K. Arnold	Naomi Milliner
Samira Ahmed	Audrey Vernick	Tracey Baptiste
Jim Averbeck	Jason June	Jon Scieszka
Louise Hawes	Tim Tingle	Veronica Roth
Rose Brock	Jo Whitemore	Shing Yin Khor
Mary Brigid Barrett	ilene Wong Gregorio	Supriya Kelkar
Kyle Lukoff	Dawn Quigley	Shaenon K. Garrity
Erika T. Wurth	Supriya Kelkar	Alex Gino
Kate Hart	Jen Calonita	Malayna Evans
Andrea L. Rogers	Jasmine Warga	Marie Lu
Traci Sorell	Ronald L. Smith	Laurel Goodluck
Brian Young	Victoria Aveyard	Randy Ribay
Erin Entrada Kelly	Rajani LaRocca	Courtney Summers
Kathi Appelt	Jennifer Ziegler	Jennifer Bertman
LeUyen Pham	Nidhi Chanani	Libba Bray
Nisha Sharma	Kami Garcia	Maulik Pancholy
Debbie Reese	Jeff Zentner	Lin Oliver
Kevin Maillard	Gale Galligan	

Sarah Albee	Lisa Fipps	Emily Skrutskie
Anne Wynter	Greg van Eekhout	Brandy Colbert
Jessica Patrick	Catherine Linka	Arigon Starr (Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma)
Kayla Cagan	Lisa McMann	Melissa Stewart
Sara Ryan	David Hyde Costello	Laura Shovan
Amy Spalding	Kristin Cast	Heidi R Kling
Jordan Sonnenblick	Janae Marks	Laura Parnum
Alexandria Giardino	Kip Wilson	Susie Ghahremani
Cory Putman Oakes	Meredith Davis	Alyson Gerber
K-Fai Steele	Bethanie Murguia	Ruth Chan
Amy Novesky	Aisha Saeed	Tui T. Sutherland
Sayantani DasGupta	Cecil Castellucci	Jimmy Gownley
Erin Soderberg Downing	Fran Manushkin	Andrea Wang
Donna Barba Higuera	Raphael Simon (aka Pseudonymous Bosch)	Kiersten White
David Bowles	Carrie Jones	Tara Dairman
Sarah Darer Littman	Pat Miller	Jen Ferguson
Nate Powell	Katie Bayerl	Fran Wilde
Heidi E.Y. Stemple	Misa Saburi	Dahlia Adler
Thyra Heder	Matt McMann	Marc Tyler Nobleman
Trung Le Nguyen	Maurene Goo	Steve Orlando
Mike Curato	Brendan Reichs	Melissa Walker
Angeline Boulley	Kaitlin Ward	Mark Oshiro
Barbara McClintock	Andrew Farago	Joe Cepeda
Hannah Barnaby	Chris Grabenstein	Trisha Moquino
Jeanne Birdsall	Edward Underhill	Lamar Giles
Steve Light	Tracy López	Robert Liu-Trujillo
Maggie Rudy	William Alexander	Mary McCoy
Brian Floca	P. C. Cast	Amanda Foody
Malinda Lo	Preeti Chhibber	Alex R Kahler
Jarrett J. Krosoczka	Gayle Forman	Laekan Zea Kemp
Sherri L. Smith	Priyanka Taslim	Mike Maihack
Nicole Maggi	Lyn Miller-Lachmann	Samantha Berger
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Ginger Johnson	Robin Stevenson	Terry Catasús Jennings
Kara Thomas	Stephanie S. Tolan	Tirzah Price
Debbi Michiko Florence	Margarita Engle	Lois Sepahban
Maryrose Wood	Mike Jung	Maria Gianferrari
Kristin Cashore	Casey W. Robinson	Alexis Larkin
Carolyn Mackler	Deva Fagan	Olivia Chadha
Lauren Castillo	Adam Gidwitz	Kalena Miller
Margo Rabb	Jenna Miller	Leslie Stall Widener
Beth McMullen	ER Frank	Z Brewer
Mary Winn Heider	Natasha Donovan	Shane Pangburn
Natalie Standiford	Heather Murphy Capps	Pat Zietlow Miller
John Rocco	Isi Hendrix	Violet Lumani
Judy Blundell/Jude Watson	Evan Turk	Terry Widener
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Susan Kralovansky	Traci Chee	Lev Rosen
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Jenn Reese	Aron Nels Steinke	Alysa Wishingrad
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Uma Krishnaswami  
Chris Eboch

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Malia Maunakea  
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Robb Pearlman  
Andrea Zimmerman  
Faith Pray  
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J. Anderson Coats  
Elise Gravel  
Amanda Hosch  
Ransom Riggs  
Julia Kuo  
Karen S. Chow  
Dianne White  
Corinna Luyken  
Ty Chapman  
Christine Taylor-Butler  
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David Wiesner  
Lisa Moore Ramee  
Gina Perry  
Chuck Gonzales  
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Jonathan Stutzman  
bryan collier  
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Helaine Becker  
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Heather Fox  
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Freeman Ng  
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Nazareth Hidalgo Lobo  
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