

ABA & ABFE JOIN OVER 50 ORGANIZATIONS TO SIGN JOINT LETTER OBJECTING TO CENSORSHIP IN EXECUTIVE ORDER ON GENDER IDENTITY

ABA and ABFE joined 50+ organizations to sign a letter expressing concern that the Trump Administration's executive order on gender will lead to censorship.

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Philomena Polefrone, PhD

Booksellers Association (ABA) and its free expression initiative, American Booksellers for Free Expression (ABFE), are proud to join more than fifty organizations representing authors, publishers, booksellers, librarians, distributors, and more [signed a joint letter](#) expressing concern that the Trump Administration's executive order, entitled "Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government" and issued January 20, 2025, will lead to censorship of literature.

Signers include national nonprofits and coalitions like the

American Booksellers Association, Authors Against Book Bans, Lambda Literary, National Coalition Against Censorship, PEN America, and We Need Diverse Books; grassroots organizations like Annie's Foundation, the Florida Freedom to Read Project, Read Freely Alabama, and the Texas Freedom to Read Project; as well as publishers, library alliances, bookstores, and individual authors.

The executive order states that the federal government shall "recognize two sexes, male and female," which it claims are determined "at conception" and "are not changeable." In addition to regulations impacting sex markers on federal identification, access to "intimate spaces" separated by sex, and the interpretation of the Civil Rights Act, the executive order instructs federal agencies that federal funds "shall not be used to promote gender ideology." It further restricts agency documents from acknowledging anything other than "biological sex," which the order claims is immutable.

Signers of the joint statement claim that the “ripple effect of this order will undoubtedly affect public schools, public libraries, and the literature that is shelved in both,” potentially leading to censorship of LGBTQIA+ books in any area that could be impacted by withholding federal funds. The statement goes on to express concern that conditions on federal funding could have a chilling effect on the production of literature featuring LGBTQIA+ perspectives.

The statement goes on to say: “The fate of trans, intersex, and nonbinary people is not a political ideology, it’s a matter of human rights, civil rights, and freedom of expression. Government erosion of those rights should concern all Americans, regardless of their investment in LGBTQIA+ literature specifically.”

Philomena Polefrone, Associate Director of ABFE at ABA, made the following statement: “The broad coalition of this letter reflects commitment across the publishing industry and civil rights groups not to back down in defense of LGBTQIA2S+ voices and the right to read. I am proud to sign this letter on behalf of ABA and ABFE.”

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