

Statement on the Trump Administration's January 20, 2025 Executive Order Targeting Transgender, Intersex, Nonbinary, and Gender-Nonconforming Americans

On January 20, the White House issued an executive order stating that the United States government will only recognize two sexes, male and female, as defined "at conception." The ripple effect of this order will undoubtedly affect public schools, public libraries, and the literature that is shelved in both.

Among the many harms it causes, the order targeting transgender, intersex, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming Americans threatens unconstitutional censorship that could have a grave impact on literature for years to come. In dismissing trans, intersex, and nonbinary identities, the order blacklists LGBTQIA+ literature and invites the government to dictate the perspectives, beliefs, and identities that can exist in public forums receiving federal funding, amounting to financial coercion through the arbitrary withholding of funds. This censorship may begin with LGBTQIA+ perspectives, but it will not end there: allowing the government to censor one group erodes the First Amendment rights of all Americans, creating a precedent for silencing dissenting voices.

If allowed to stand, the order will create new funding requirements imposed not only on federal entities, but private citizens and institutions who contract with them. Those requirements can and will be manipulated to dictate speech. The broader chilling effect on literature could be even harder to undo. Writers rely on funding from sources like the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, as well as the state-level institutions they fund.

Trans, nonbinary, and intersex experience is vastly underrepresented in literature but disproportionately targeted by bans. During the 2022-2023 school year, 30% of books banned included LGBTQIA+ characters or themes. Such censorship robs us of perspectives that enrich the American story. Though the executive order in question tries to paint LGBTQIA+ people and allies as bullies enforcing their perspective on

others through “legal and other socially coercive means,” that’s exactly what the order itself does, just as book-banning pressure groups have done since 2020 in school boards and libraries around the country. 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.

This executive order is censorship, pure and simple, and it has no place in a free society. It must be rescinded or stayed as soon as possible, and at the latest, before the earliest implementation deadline, February 19, 2025. Financially blacklisting trans, intersex, and non-binary perspectives will rob us of a vital literature yet to be written while insulting the dignity of LGBTQIA+ people everywhere. This return to McCarthyism by other means is a leap backwards to a grim chapter of American history.

Sincerely, the undersigned,

- **American Booksellers Association**
- **American Booksellers for Free Expression**
- **Andrews McMeel**
- **Annie’s Foundation**
- **Audio Publishers Association**
- **Authors Against Book Bans**
- **Berry Powell Press**
- **Cardinal Rule Press**
- **Charlesbridge Publishing**
- **Chestnut Publishing House**
- **Comic Book Legal Defense Fund**
- **Deborah Sloan and Company and Kidsbuzz**
- **Developmental Texts**
- **Empowering Latino Futures**
- **EveryLibrary**
- **Firewater Media Group**
- **Florida Freedom to Read Project**
- **Foreword Reviews**
- **Freedom to Read Project**
- **Gryphon Publishing Consulting, LLC**
- **Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA)**
- **Ingram Content Group**
- **Judging by the Cover: A Bookstore**
- **Lafayette Citizens Against Censorship**
- **Lambda Literary**
- **Latino 247 Media Group**
- **Lee Wind, author**
- **Levine Querido**
- **Library Futures**
- **Livingston Parish Library Alliance**
- **Louisiana Citizens Against Censorship**
- **Macmillan Children’s Publishing Group**
- **National Coalition Against Censorship**
- **NorthSouth Books**

- Nosy Crow
- Patagonia
- Publishers and Writers of San Diego and Orange County
- PEN America
- PFLAG Fresno
- PubWest
- Rattling Good Yarns Press
- Read Freely Alabama
- Red Comet Press LLC
- Rutherford County Library Alliance

- Sara Paretsky, Writer
- SCBWI
- SparkPoint Studio
- St Tammany Library Alliance
- Stone Bridge Press
- Texas Freedom to Read Project
- The National Book Critics Circle
- Walker Books Group for Candlewick Press, Holiday House Books, and Peachtree Publishing
- We Need Diverse Books

