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## Book Industry Coalition Opposes Federal Book Banning Effort

By Nathalie op de Beeck | Apr 14, 2026

Publishers, authors, booksellers, librarians, parent groups, and literary organizations—including *PW*—have signed a statement opposing House Resolution 7661, a book banning bill titled the Stop the Sexualization of Children Act by its initiators.

HR 7661 would amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to prohibit federal education funds from being used in public classrooms and school libraries alleged to possess “sexually oriented materials.”

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In March, HR 7661 advanced from the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce, and the next step is a floor vote in the House of Representatives.

The opposition statement was drafted by a working group that includes Authors Against Book Bans president Maggie Tokuda-Hall; American Booksellers for Free Expression associate director Philomena Polefrone; Sarah Lamdan and Amelia Aldred of the American Library Association Office of Intellectual Freedom; and representatives from the National Education Association.

As of April 13, 133 organizations and associations have added their names.

The coalition’s statement reads, in part, that “HR 7661, if passed, will compel nationwide book censorship. It confuses obscenity with identity and stigmatizes vulnerable young people, particularly trans children and teens, based on who they are. It will continue to drain funding from our already underfunded schools and libraries. And it will threaten the creativity and critical thinking that are vital to education in the U.S.”

Signatories took to social media to post the statement, which is not hosted on a landing page at present. We Need Diverse Books and Macmillan Children’s School and Library Marketing shared it on BlueSky. The American Booksellers Association and Abrams Books shared it on Instagram.

In the weeks since the bill's introduction in February, authors including Katherine Applegate and Ryan La Sala, and librarians such as Mychal Threets, have shared videos to raise awareness of how HR 7661 censorship targets young readers.

Penguin Random House, a signatory to the working group's statement, posted a separate letter to Congress, signed by sales operations and library sales SVP Skip Dye, an advocate of the freedom to read. "We wanted to issue our own statement from PRH in addition to the coalition statement," a PRH spokesperson told *PW*.

EveryLibrary, the fiscal sponsor of AABB, also is hosting an action center to help constituents make their voices heard, with clickable links to oppose HR 7661 as well as to support the Right to Read Act.

"This is a moment when everyone needs to call their reps," said AABB's Tokuda-Hall. "Our understanding from the coalition is that it would be expected to pass the House. The next question is, would it be able to pass the Senate?"

Tokuda-Hall cautioned people across the U.S., including in states with Democratic leadership or moderate reps, that the House might not stand up for "commonsense" First Amendment principles. With Republicans in control of the House, she said, this is a make-or-break moment for censorship. "They are looking for easy wins, and attacking transgender rights and the right to read is an easy win for them," Tokuda-Hall noted, particularly when the title of the bill suggests child protection and when constituents may be too distracted by other global crises to be aware of a censorship bill.

AABB "has already seen insane effects of bills on the state level," Tokuda-Hall added, pointing to efforts in New Braunfels, Texas, "to pull 1,500 books at once" from schools, including memoirs by Barack and Michelle Obama and George W. Bush. "Either we throw in as much effort as we can, or we spend the next decade trying to unravel it."

ABFE's Polefrone told *PW* that "booksellers are standing shoulder to shoulder with our allies" in the coalition. Polefrone said that HR 7661 makes books "less accessible" and targets "marginalized students and families. Readers deserve a rich, diverse literary ecosystem, and the book industry is coming together to protect it."

From Tokuda-Hall's perspective, HR 7661 is a bill "written to solve a problem that doesn't exist, for political expedience." She insisted that calls and conversations can make a difference: "Direct action is what we need most right now."

*This article has been updated.*