Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of the State of New York
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

November 18, 2026

Re: New York Authors Urge Gov. Hochul to Sign the New York Freedom to Read Act

Dear Governor Hochul,

We, the undersigned authors committed to the freedom to read, respectfully urge you to sign New York's Freedom to Read Act, A.9537/S.8630. Many of us reside and write in New York or have felt the harms of library censorship as our books have been banned in New York and elsewhere. As a state with a vibrant literary community, New York must take action to protect the rights of its readers, writers, librarians, and educators.

According to PEN America's *Index of School Book Bans*, over two dozen books have been banned across several New York school districts since 2021. Additionally, a new survey from the New York Freedom to Read Coalition of over 300 New York librarians and educators reported the following:

- About half of school and public librarians reported at least one material targeted for removal or restriction since 2020.
- About 10 percent of librarians had at least 10 materials targeted since 2020.
- Over one third of educators and library staff at public schools said they felt pressure to self-censor.

Whether it's a Florida school district with hundreds of removals or a New York school district with a half dozen, the harm of book bans for young people is always concerning. Many of our books represent the lives of people already underrepresented on shelves, serving as a vital resource for young people of color, LGBTQ+ youth, and their peers to better understand themselves and each other. Recognizing that even one book ban is one too many, states across the country are taking proactive steps to keep these resources available. Thirteen states have now codified freedom to read protections, including Massachusetts most recently.

Protecting students' access to information means books cannot be removed from school libraries because of personal opinions or political ideologies, and requires the implementation of and adherence to an established, rigorous, fair, and transparent review process. New York's Freedom to Read Act would do just that by prohibiting ideologically-driven removals and protecting librarians and educators from retaliation for preserving access to books. The protections against

retaliation would also help address self-censorship as school and library staff could not be disciplined for doing their jobs.

It's time for New York to take a stand against book censorship. We ask that you affirm New York students' right to read by signing the Freedom to Read Act into law.

Signed,

Authors with works banned in New York:
Elana K. Arnold, author of *Red Hood*
Jonathan Evison, author of *Lawn Boy*
John Green, author of *Looking for Alaska*
Ellen Hopkins, author of *People Kill People*
Ibram X. Kendi, co-author of *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You*
Maia Kobabe, author of *Gender Queer: A Memoir*
Susan Kuklin, author of *Beyond Magenta: Transgender and Nonbinary Teens Speak Out*
Ashley Hope Pérez, author of *Out of Darkness*
Annemarie Young & Anthony Robinson, authors of *Young Palestinians Speak*
Lev AC Rosen, author of *Jack of Hearts (and other parts)*
Julia Scheeres, author of *Jesus Land: A Memoir*
Nic Stone, author of *Dear Martin*

(Note: Titles listed above have previously appeared in PEN America's Index of School Book Bans as having been banned in the state of New York one or more times since 2021.)

New York authors:
TJ Alexander
Deborah N. Archer
Sarah Baker
Rachelle Bergstein
Carissa Chesanek
Nino Cipri
Mike Curato
Randee Dawn
Jennifer Egan
Scott Frank
Ruth Ben-Ghiat
Adam Gidwitz
Krystyna Poray Goddu
Jyoti Rajan Gopal
Philip Gourevitch
Julie Gribble
Lev Grossman
Amy Guglielmo
Deborah Heiligman
Ying-Hwa Hu
Maxine Kaplan
Maham Khwaja
Kari Kraków
London Ladd
Victoria Law
Victoria Lee
Peter Lerangis
Gail Carson Levine

David Levithan
Elizabeth Levy
E. Lockhart
Linda Elovitz Marshall
Patricia McCormick
Emily McCully
Emily Mendoza
Paul Muldoon
Carrie Mullins
Roxie Munro
Amy Nathan
Robin Newman
Linda Sue Park
Peter Parnell
John Parra
James Patterson
Jodi Picoult
Susanna Reich
Justin Richardson
Julia Sarcone-Roach
Susan L. Roth
Isabel Roxas
Anita Sanchez
Esmeralda Santiago
Colleen Kong-Savage
Meredith Schorr
Eliot Schrefer
Marilyn Singer
Andrew Solomon
Art Spiegelman
Javaka Steptoe
Sergio Troncoso
Carolyn Vaughan
Melissa Walker
Ellen Weinstein
Elizabeth Winthrop
Meg Wolitzer
Cornelius Van Wright
Bo Zaunders
Paul O. Zelinsky
Elizabeth Zunon

Organizational signatories:

The Authors Guild

New York Authors Against Book Bans

PEN America
PEN America Children's and Young Adult Books Committee

We Need Diverse Books