

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence  
For HB 1375

Compiled on: Thursday, April 24, 2025 12:42 AM

Note: Comments received by the committee reflect only the view of the individual(s) submitting the comment, who retain sole responsibility for the content of the comment. Neither the committee nor the Texas House of Representatives takes a position on the views expressed in any comment. The committee compiles the comments received for informational purposes only and does not exercise any editorial control over comments.

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Hearing Date: April 23, 2025 8:00 AM

Greg Bentley  
self  
Flint, TX

I'm not a lobbyist. I'm not a lawyer. I'm just a dad—a regular guy trying to raise my kids right in a world that feels less and less safe for them every day.

House Bill 1375 by Rep. Schatzline expands civil liability for businesses that distribute or display materials considered harmful to minors. It's not about banning books or taking away freedom—it's about putting some basic accountability in place when children are exposed to content that no kid should ever have to see.

As parents, we can no longer trust that walking into a bookstore or a family retailer will be safe for our kids anymore. That's wrong, and it doesn't have to be that way.

HB 1375 gives parents some backup. It says that businesses don't get to shrug their shoulders anymore when they put harmful material where kids can find it. It says there's a line, and if you cross it, there are consequences. That's appropriate accountability, but it will also be a deterrent.

Our kids deserve a little more innocence, a little more protection, and a little more of our effort. They're only young once. If we don't fight for that now, we won't get a second chance.

So I'm asking you—not as lawmakers, but as people who love your own families—to support HB 1375. Not just for me, but for every dad and mom in Texas who's trying to raise their children in a society that no longer values protecting them from indecency.

Christin Bentley, SD-1 State Republican Executive Committeewoman  
Texas GOP's Stop Sexualizing Texas Kids Legislative Priority Committee  
Winona, TX

Current Texas law, as articulated in Penal Code § 43.24, defines materials harmful to minors and provides limited criminal enforcement mechanisms for certain cases of exposure. However, there is a significant gap in civil remedies available to parents and guardians when businesses act negligently or with willful disregard in exposing minors to such content.

HB 1375 aims to fill that gap. By extending civil liability, the bill provides a meaningful deterrent to negligent or reckless conduct by commercial entities. It encourages businesses to adopt age-verification processes, better shelving policies, and content-screening protocols, aligning private conduct with well-established state interests in protecting the welfare of minors.

The legislation is rooted in well-established constitutional precedent. The U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly affirmed that the government has a compelling interest in safeguarding minors from obscene or harmful materials (see *Ginsberg v. New York*, 390 U.S. 629 (1968)). HB 1375 operates within those constitutional boundaries, focusing not on censorship or suppression of adult access, but on restricting commercial exposure to minors through targeted civil penalties.

Moreover, the bill does not impose vague or subjective standards. Texas law already provides clear definitions for what constitutes harmful material to minors. HB 1375 simply allows private parties to seek redress when businesses fail to take reasonable measures to prevent such exposure.

In conclusion, HB 1375 balances constitutional freedoms with the state's duty to protect minors. It incentivizes responsible business practices, empowers families to pursue accountability, and reinforces Texas's commitment to child welfare and safe community standards.

I respectfully urge the committee to move this bill forward for consideration by the full House.

Thank you for your time and service to the people of Texas.

Respectfully,  
Christin Bentley, MS  
Winona, TX  
SD-1 State Republican Executive Committeewoman

Dalia Azim  
Self  
Austin, TX

This bill would cripple bookstores—which are essential facets of our communities—and put them out of business. There is no viable path for bookstores to evaluate and implement the type of oversight of material that this bill would require, and the parameters are too subjective and open to interpretation. What one person might deem harmful to minors, many others would not. It should be up to the caregivers to determine what is appropriate for minors in their care can read. It is not the responsibility of bookstores.

Michael Conti  
Self, Library Worker  
Austin, TX

Please reject HB 1375.

First the self-appointed censors claimed, “we’re not banning books, these books just don’t belong in schools.” Then they swore, “we’re not banning books, these books just don’t belong in public libraries.” Now that the target is bookstores, will they finally embrace their real name, Book Banners?

This is a wholly unnecessary law meant to have a chilling effect on booksellers, most particularly those carrying titles featuring LGBTQ+ characters, subjects, and themes that have overwhelmingly been the target of book banning campaigns, organizations, and politicians. The language of this bill even suggests its own unconstitutionality!

The goal here isn’t anyone’s safety, it’s the suppression of everyone’s right to speak, write, and read freely. Reject HB 1375.

Audrey Youngblood  
Self  
Fort Worth, TX

“no” vote on censorship bill. This is discriminatory towards marginalized people, especially those in the LGBTQ community. Let parents parent and do not take away their rights or the rights of any Texan to determine what reading material is appropriate for themselves.

Andrew Pierce  
Self/Self  
Lorena, TX

I strongly support this bill to protect children! There is so much bad stuff being thrown at them. We need book publishers to clean up their act. Right now it is so hard to even find good books for teens and many parents like myself have to use old books from 40 years ago to ensure they have something clean.

Suzette Baker  
Self  
Buchanan Dam, TX

Vote no on this bill.

Riley Welch  
Self  
Kyle, TX

While protection of minors is crucial in our society, the law already protects from selling legally harmful materials. This guarantee does not guarantee the safety of children in our communities, but instead will encourage frivolous lawsuits against bookstores (and other sellers for that matter). It allows individuals to decide what they think is harmful and project it as they wish on to the public. This bill would be expensive to enforce, not to mention impossible to fully comply with. What impact would this have on the business that then have to fight frivolous lawsuits? How would this cause harm to Texas economy? I can only imagine.

Heather Hornor Hornor  
Self/administrator  
Dallas, TX

Please vote no.

Kim Tidwell

Self

Austin, TX

Hi, my name is Kim Tidwell from Austin. I'd like to voice my opposition to HB 1375 for which testimony will be heard during the Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee hearing on Wednesday. I've been horrified by the rise of book challenges and book bans in Texas public schools and public libraries over the past several years. These challenges and bans have come with assurances that I can still buy the books I chose from bookstores. HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare our amazing local booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book bans. Please don't interfere with my ability to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools, by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Please don't vote HB 1375 out of committee.

Cheryl Foster

Self, voracious reader

Waco, TX

This bill will hurt independent book sellers - so just what is harmful - I'll tell you - it's our state republican legislators! Please vote no on this bill.

April Murphy, Dr.

Self

Austin, TX

It is already illegal to sell minors legally harmful material. But in creating a civil cause of action, this bill virtually guarantees frivolous lawsuits filed against bookstores to limit free speech. If someone merely thinks their child has been "harmed" by accessing a book they deem harmful, they can file a suit against a bookseller. It can be a way for people to harass booksellers or damage small businesses regardless of the claim's merit. This bill is a waste of time and a limit of freedom.

Jaime deBlanc-Knowles, Ms.

self, writer

Austin, TX

I am deeply concerned about the harm that HB 1375 would do to small businesses. This bill would encourage frivolous lawsuits to be filed against bookstores, and the time and expense of opposing such suits is more than any small business owner can take on. I believe that this bill would become a bounty bill that someone can use to seek damages when no damage has been done, in the hopes of intimidating someone into a settlement. It could also become a way for someone to harass a bookstore they don't like. This bill would cause needless harm to small businesses, and I respectfully urge you to oppose the passing of this bill and to stand up for the rights of small business owners in Texas.

Erin Cotter, Dr  
self  
Austin, TX

I write today to ask legislators to reject Texas HB 1375. This bill will harm authors, small businesses, and ultimately the children the bill claims to protect.

Texas HB 1375 alters the human trafficking section of the penal code, implying that books are being used for grooming children. This is false and dangerous. It is already illegal to sell “harmful to minors” materials under Texas Penal Code §43.24. HB 1375 merely creates a pathway for frivolous lawsuits.

In similar situations and in other contexts, we have seen cottage industries emerge where unscrupulous attorneys find serial plaintiffs to seek damages and provide a payday in legal fees. [1] If Texas HB 1375 becomes law, people will file suits looking for bounties even though suits will not have merit. Such suits will devastate small businesses as a single settlement or the cost of bringing a single suit to court could put an independent bookstore out of business.

Such a law would force bookstores to close their doors to minors, bringing an end to story times and children’s book sections, both of which are essential supports for the academic achievement and social emotional development of minors. At the same time, the consequences of the law would threaten the livelihoods of law-abiding Texans who own or are employed by bookstores. But not only that, this bill would needlessly imperil authors. The overly broad language of the bill makes the stopping point for criminal charges dangerously unclear.

I ask you to protect the rights of your citizens and reject this reckless bill.

Leslie McCrary, Children's Independent Bookseller  
Self  
San Antonio, TX

As a children’s independent bookseller, I work with some of the most educated and emotionally intelligent professionals with no personal or professional interest in harming or indoctrinating minors. If bookstores and sellers are to be held accountable in this manner, what follows are a litany of art spaces including museums, music venues and concert halls where minors may be exposed to harmful material. The spaces and places for said exposure to occur is really endless. Good grief.

Karen Maxwell  
Self  
Abilene, TX

I oppose censorship and moving in that direction. Allow people to make their own decisions.

Samuel Brigham-McLellan

Self

Austin, TX

My name is Samuel McLellan. I'm writing to express my opposition to HB 1375.

I believe it would be detrimental to our society and economy to allow individuals to bring a civil suit against bookstores for a multitude of reasons.

The United States functions as a de facto free market society in which we are allowed to pick and choose what we consume and view with little restriction, and as such we allow our citizens and shared choices to determine what businesses fail and succeed in a community. Because we are free to choose what we do consume and view that also means that it also our individual choice what we don't consume as well. It is not then the burden of businesses to stock goods according to threats of legal action when they are not forcing you to do anything, you enter a store of your own accord and buy what you want as long as it is legal for you to buy it.

I feel that this is even more important in the matters of written words and thoughts. We have the right to express ourselves through books and media, and we have the right to be able to choose what we read. If someone does not like what they see on the shelf of a private bookstore then they are perfectly free to not buy it and move to a section or store that suits them better. They do not have the right however to restrict other people's choices, other people's right to self-expression, or attempt to bully the bookstore to match their needs via a lawsuit. They also do not have the right to force a bookstore to go against their values and sell something they don't want or stop selling something they want to sell. The supreme court ruling for Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission set the precedent of corporate personhood, so I don't think it is a stretch to protect a bookstore from frivolous lawsuits based on personal opinions.

This kind of political tactic has become shockingly common in recent years and is often under the guise of protecting children from explicit material. However, even if this is the honest intention of this bill it is still not up to the bookstore to raise or protect people's children for them. Parents must supervise trips to the bookstore for their children, not place these matters in the hands of the courts.

Additionally I feel that what is considered offensive varies greatly from person to person and this could easily be used to target against LGBTQ literature and other marginalized groups through repeated lawsuits that would cause bookstores unnecessary court costs, and clog up the courts with bogus and politically slanted litigation in an effort to take away their right to expression. In conclusion this bill is too likely to be abused and is very susceptible to bias to be considered effective and useful legislation, it at best attempts to solve a problem that does not exist, and at worst is another tool for political bullying of people who are just trying to live their lives. I strongly urge the committee to vote against this bill.

Linda Ricks

Self

Midlothian, TX

Dear Members,

I support this bill. Please vote it out of committee.

Thank you,

Linda Ricks

Frank Anderson

Self

Fort Worth, TX

As a parent you have a right to control what your child reads. You don't have a right to control what every one gets to read. You can't police ideas. You can't force people to think and act like you just because you think you have some divine authority, you don't. America is a place of many cultures, many backgrounds and many different types of people. They don't need politicians (taking to you Nate) who have some high and mighty need to legislate morality and stick their nose in other peoples business.

Timothy Curtis

Self

Austin, TX

HB 1375 would likely be very harmful to small businesses such as independent bookstores, or perhaps even other businesses that offer books as part of their inventory. This bill would create a level of uncertainty that that could potentially result in many harmful consequences, such as closing of bookstores, even without a suit, simply because of the risk of one occurring. Many communities do not even have the luxury of an independent bookstore. Would you take this away from a community? Bookstores are often providers of additional educational and social enrichment activities, such as author readings and performances , or even message boards for advertising other businesses. It is already difficult to start a business or maintain and a business a bill, such as this one makes the endeavor practically impossible. This bill would be very harmful, and should not be considered.

Erin Quinn-Kong

Self, author and editor

Austin, TX

This is a ludicrous bill that makes it easier for book banners to raise frivolous lawsuits from false claims against booksellers.

Katherine Burescia

Family

Llano, TX

As a mother of 3 young children living in Llano County, Tx, I can tell you how it will destroy a library if you allow book bans and removal. It not only destroys libraries, but communities. These bans put neighbors against neighbors, allow hatred and horrendous names to be called of community members all because they see that books are a choice to be read. You can't force people to read. It is a choice. A choice that provides someone to identify with a part of a book of they feel different or down. A vision into someone else's imagination, if you cannot see the world as they do. It allows us to know that people are different and that is ok! It brings color, a story and entertainment to pages. Why are we taking that away?? Why do we want to criminalize those who write because they have a creative voice to share? If you don't like it, close it and pick another. That is the magic of books!

It is sad that as a mother of 3, I spend hours upon hours trying to fight for my kids to be able to read what interests them. We are here to guide our kids to be independent and strong adults. To be kind and contribute to society. If they travel or go to college, they will come across people that aren't exactly like them, that is the beauty of human beings. Some they will like, some they will hate, some they will have nothing in common, but again, just as we taught them with books, they can also choose the people they surround themselves with.

Reading creates confidence in a child that may struggle in other areas. Reading and books are not the enemy, it is those who want to make money off of these book bans pushing their agendas! Using our kids as pawns in a game! Attacking their freedom to read, their freedom to learn!

Leave the books, those who write them and those who publish them alone! There isn't harm in that, unless we take it all away

Chris Donofrio

Self

The Woodlands, TX

I STRONGLY OPPOSE HB 1375.

As Introduced this bill contains numerous problems.

To start with, HB 1375 contains sections referring specifically to minors, yet implies through other sections that it applies to non-minors.

This must be resolved because HB 1375 is fundamentally anchored on the Penal Code's definition of obscenity.

This is stated on p1, L1-2: "AN ACT relating to civil liability for obscenity."

The bill defines obscenity by linking to a specific section of the Penal Code. This is the relevant portion of the Penal Code foundational to HB 1375.

"Sec. 43.21. DEFINITIONS. (a) In this subchapter:

(1) "Obscene" means material or a performance that:

(A) the average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that taken as a whole appeals to the prurient interest in sex;

(B) depicts or describes:

(i) patently offensive representations or descriptions of ultimate sexual acts, normal or perverted, actual or simulated, including sexual intercourse, sodomy, and sexual bestiality; or

(ii) patently offensive representations or descriptions of masturbation, excretory functions, sadism, masochism, lewd exhibition of the genitals, the male or female genitals in a state of sexual stimulation or arousal, covered male genitals in a discernibly turgid state or a device designed and marketed as useful primarily for stimulation of the human genital organs; and

(C) taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, and scientific value."

Patently offensive means "so offensive on its face as to affront current community standards of decency."

The 63-R Leg. wrote the original version of this code in 1973. It was last amended in 2003 by the 73-R Leg. Over the subsequent 52 years a lot has changed. Aside from bestiality, all of the referenced actions are now considered acceptable by adult Americans. Millions of us actively participate in at least one of them, resulting in no possible affront to current community standards of decency.

Finally, HB 1375 prevents anyone accused their constitutionally guaranteed right of due process. This bill is very specific on prohibited defenses, including the defendant:

"has been acquitted or has not been prosecuted or convicted under Subchapter B, Chapter 43, Penal Code;" (p3, L8-9)

believes "that the requirements of this chapter are unconstitutional or were unconstitutional;" (p3, L14-15)

"relies on any state or federal court decision that is not binding on the court in which the action has been brought." (p3, L20-21)

I STRONGLY OPPOSE HB 1375.

Please, kill it in Committee

Respectfully, Chris J Donofrio

Mary Terrier

self

Austin, TX

HB 1375 is a threat to small businesses, including beloved local bookstores which provide fun, educational programming for children, in addition to selling literature to adults. This is another step in the direction of restricting access to important classic books under the guise of "obscenity."

Bridget Brame  
self  
Georgetown, TX

My family and friends SUPPORT this bill. It's our understanding this bill gives families an ability to take civil action for damages arising from the distribution, transmission, or display of harmful material to a minor by a commercial entity.

Jennifer Garza  
Self  
Midland, TX

I am highly against this bill. As a conservative Republican, I am appalled that you believe it should be the governments right to control who can purchase books. As a parent who regularly shops at local bookstores, you will be opening the floodgates to civil lawsuits. Booksellers have zero control over who receives any book. It is solely the PARENTS job to decide who and what our children read. We are not going to have a Fahrenheit 451 situation where all books are controlled, because if you recall, that is the plot of the story. Vote no, and do not allow this bill to happen. It is one thing to be concerned about what is taught in our schools and where items are filed in public libraries, but this goes way above that. Do NOT vote for this bill.

Margaret Koranek, Ph.D.  
self  
New Braunfels, TX

It is already illegal to sell harmful literature to minors. This bill, which would allow civil suits to be filed by anyone who thinks their child has been harmed by a book, will lead to frivolous lawsuits that will create hardships for independent booksellers. It will have a chilling effect on freedom of speech by creating a way for people to harrass bookstores they do not like. This bill is a threat to freedom of speech and paves the way for people to insist on bans of books that are not harmful but which they do not like. Please do not support this bill.

Donna Kearley  
Self  
Lewisville, TX

Please vote no on this bill. It is the parents responsibility to make sure their children is choosing material appropriate to their age. Bringing lawsuits could bankrupt a bookstore from a simple mistake which could be corrected by returning the material for a refund or replacement.

Corinne Allen

Myself; A citizen and Resident of Harris County

League City, TX

Comment on the Unconstitutionality of Texas HB 1375

To the Texas Legislature:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 1375, which would create a civil cause of action against bookstores if minors access content deemed "harmful." This bill raises serious constitutional concerns under the First Amendment.

The Supreme Court has consistently held that laws restricting access to protected speech must be narrowly tailored to serve a compelling government interest. While protecting minors is important, HB 1375 creates an overly broad mechanism that would chill protected speech and expression.

Specifically:

**Vague Standards:** The bill's definition of "harmful" content creates uncertainty that will lead bookstores to self-censor far beyond what is constitutionally permissible.

**Chilling Effect:** By allowing any individual to bring civil suits against bookstores, this legislation creates a mechanism for harassment that will inevitably lead to the removal of constitutionally protected materials.

**Undue Burden:** Bookstores would be forced to either exclude minors entirely or implement burdensome age verification systems, effectively restricting access to protected speech.

**Precedent Violation:** This approach contradicts established Supreme Court precedent in cases like *Bantam Books v. Sullivan* (1963) and *American Booksellers v. Hudnut* (1985), which protect booksellers from overly restrictive regulations.

The practical effect of this legislation would be to make it financially risky for bookstores to carry controversial but legally protected books, particularly those addressing topics like sexuality, gender, race, and politics. This represents an unconstitutional restriction on the free flow of ideas.

I urge you to reject HB 1375 and instead work toward solutions that protect minors while respecting our constitutional commitment to free expression.

Respectfully submitted,

Corinne Allen

Laurie Filipelli

Mighty Writing, LLC

Austin, TX

As a small business owner who works with teens on the path to college, I heartily oppose this unnecessary bill. There are already sufficient laws in place about selling minors illegal materials. This law could burden independent book stores with frivolous lawsuits and diminish their ability to serve our communities, especially teen readers. Plus turn your attention to more pressing needs for Texas citizens who are struggling to get by. Texans are sick and tired of house members fueling culture wars instead of serving the true needs of constituents.

Kaleigh Alexander

Self

Abilene, TX

I oppose this bill and do not want it passed

Brinda Shah

self

Farmers Branch, TX

I would like to voice opposition to HB 1375 that will be heard during the Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee hearing on Wednesday. I've been watching the rise of book challenges and book bans in our Texas public schools and public libraries for the past several years, and have been assured that I don't need to worry, because I can still buy the books from the bookstore. HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries. Please don't interfere with my family's ability to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools, by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Please don't vote HB 1375 out of committee.

Kelsey Black

Self

Pflugerville, TX

My Name is Kelsey Black, I own the Book Burrow in downtown Pflugerville, and I oppose this bill. I started my bookstore in my garage 4 years ago during the COVID-19 pandemic. I have built my way to where I am today in downtown Pflugerville despite the odds of opening a bookstore in the 21st-century. Since the beginning of The Book Burrow I knew we only needed two things to survive as a bookstore. Those two things are books and community. One of those things many lacked during the pandemic. We, The Book Burrow, strive to create community-building events like book clubs, craft nights, Homeschool Socials, educator nights and so much more. I have 8 employees and I am weirdly proud I've paid tens of thousands of dollars in sales tax as a business. Our primary demographic is families. Or as Pflugervillians say... Pfamilies.

What HB 1375 intends to outlaw is already illegal, and we obey that law. In making us liable to civil suits, though, the law would put needless pressure on an already demanding job of small business ownership. The effect of the bill will be to put a bounty on anyone who sells products. Bills like this have historically been used to abuse, harass or try to get settlements from people just trying to live the Dream of owning a small business. Our industry has razor-thin profit margins and a lot of bookstores barely make ends meet. If this law were to pass, one lawsuit could put every independently owned small business in jeopardy of going out of business due to frivolous lawsuits. If it passes, we will have to reconsider if we can welcome "Pfamiles" into our store.

Please vote no on HB 1375 to protect small businesses and our relationships to our communities. Thank you.

Amanda Johnston

self

Round Rock, TX

This bill is harmful to Texans, booksellers, and libraries and obstructs literacy and education efforts by limiting access to literature. I am against this bill and ask our representatives to support their constituents by voting against HB 1375.

Amy Williamson

Self - stay at home parent

Austin, TX

I am a mom of two girls in Austin, TX. This bill targets the livelihoods of Texans working in bookstores and other commercial entities that sell books in the state. Because book-banning is such a hot issue in this state, this will open up booksellers to be the target of anyone who has a personal agenda based on what they believe children should and should not be reading. In a state that touts "parental rights," that should extend to retail outlets as well. If a parent is concerned with what their children are purchasing, they should supervise them while the purchase is being made and be informed about the contents. I am always more than happy to research a book's content before my children read it, and ultimately it is a right of passage and important developmental milestone for a child to learn and be able to police their own consumption of reading materials. However, requiring us to ultimately police the contents of the books, as well as decide what children can and cannot purchase, would be prohibitive to our abilities. There are plenty of age-appropriate children's books that some parents may still find objectionable for a variety of reasons, and it is the parents' job, not the booksellers,' to ensure that their children are reading what they deem as appropriate. This bill will not stop children from reading what they want to read. All it will do is allow a select few individuals to decide what everyone can or cannot read and potentially put many stores out of business, thus adding to the strain of an already difficult economy. Please reconsider this bill, let booksellers do their jobs, and let parents choose what their own children can and cannot read, not anyone else's.

Madeline kinkel

self

Austin, TX

In the first place, this is an infringement on small businesses. How many people and businesses are we trying to drive out of Texas?

Who gets to decide what's harmful to minors? Why do we trust our youth so little that we think they can't discern things for themselves? When I was a child, I read well beyond my grade level--novels like "The Grapes of Wrath," and works by Hemmingway. Someone might say these are "harmful to minors," and "obscene" but through reading books like these I learned how to interrogate ideas, how to decide which ideas I liked and which I didn't. Bills like this do nothing but treat children as if they have no minds of their own, like they need to be protected from ideas because they can't discern for themselves things like right and wrong.

This bill is an attempt to curtail free speech, to limit what can be said and what topics can be written about. For these reasons, I am opposed to this bill, and hope that you, as my representatives, will stand with me against this bill and against free speech limitations.

Elizabeth Morgan

self, paralegal

Austin, TX

Hi, my name is Elizabeth Morgan in Austin, TX. I am commenting to voice strong opposition to HB 1375 that will be heard during the Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee hearing on Wednesday. I am extremely concerned and appalled by the rise of book challenges and book bans in our Texas public schools and public libraries. Multiple members of the legislature have stated and assured the public that we don't need to worry because we can still buy the books from the bookstore.

HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries. Please do not encourage censorship by interfering with the ability of all Texans to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools. This bill would do just that by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits.

Therefore, I implore you to let this bill die and do not vote HB 1375 out of committee. Thank you for your time and consideration of my comments.

Juli Berwald

self

Austin, TX

I am writing in opposition to this bill whose aim seems to be to bring frivolous lawsuits against small business owners. I am an active visitor and purchaser from bookstores across the state. I believe in the importance of bookstores to support our local economies, and as a purveyor of our heritage and the talented people who live here. This unnecessary bill makes it possible for a random person to act like a bounty hunter and hold a bookstore hostage until a settlement is made. It has nothing to do with protecting children from reading material, as we already have laws that cover that. This bill shuts down job creation, makes it impossible for bookstore owners to do their jobs, and is generally unnecessary. This is a bad bill for Texas.

Jennifer Hansen

My household- Administrative Assistant and TX Certified Teacher

Austin, TX

I am AGAINST HB 1375.

Linda Bannister

self

Weatherford, TX

HB1375 will have a detrimental effect on the livelihoods of booksellers and make them targets of anyone with an uninformed agenda. It is the job of parents, not the booksellers, to ensure that their children are reading what they deem as appropriate. This bill will not stop children from reading what they want to read. All this bill will do is allow those with an extremist agenda to harass and target individual store owners and ultimately put many out of business. Small business are the backbone of most communities. They are already suffering under this economy. Why create unfair regulations that will put them out of business? Please do not support HB1375.

Erin McReynolds Davis

Self, writer

Austin, TX

This bill would be impossible to comply with and encourages frivolous lawsuits against small businesses already struggling with a dearth of time and money. It is already illegal to sell minors material deemed legally "harmful", but to empower every member of the public to each individually interpret the meaning of "harmful" and file an expensive and time-consuming lawsuit accordingly would be disastrous for businesses and their employees.

Sarah George

Self / Sales

Austin, TX

Misrepresentating this bill as "civil liberty for obscenity" is shameful and intentionally misleads constituents from realizing that this bill would police books and booksellers. I strongly oppose this bill and any other legislation that would limit the ability of booksellers to sell stories. Don't you have anything more important to do than to infringe on our rights? Hands off books!

Molly O'Neil

self

Austin, TX

I strongly oppose HB 1375 as it represents a dangerous overreach into both business operations and personal freedoms. This bill threatens small businesses, including bookstores and online retailers, by exposing them to legal liability for selling books that may be labeled controversial or "obscene" under vague terms. This creates a chilling effect that could drive retailers to remove essential literature from their shelves—books that many families, educators, and young people rely on to explore diverse ideas and perspectives.

Additionally, this bill undermines our fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression. It is not the role of government to dictate which books we can or cannot read in our homes or communities. Families should have the freedom to choose the content they wish to engage with, not have it restricted by government-imposed limits based on subjective standards.

HB 1375 would hurt businesses, limit access to information, and stifle the free exchange of ideas in Texas. I urge you to reject this bill and protect both the rights of Texans and the businesses that serve them.

Brandy Herr

Self- Bookseller

Granbury, TX

I am the inventory manager for a local bookstore in Texas. This bill targets not just my own livelihood, but the livelihoods of countless others working in bookstores and other commercial entities that sell books in the state. Because book-banning is such a hot issue in this state, this will open up booksellers to be the target of anyone who has a personal agenda based on what they believe children should and should not be reading. In a state that touts "parental rights," that should extend to retail outlets as well. If a parent is concerned with what their children are purchasing, they should supervise them while the purchase is being made and be informed about the contents. As a bookseller, I am always more than happy to research a book's content should a parent have any questions. However, requiring us to ultimately police the contents of the books, as well as decide what children can and cannot purchase, would be prohibitive to our abilities. There are plenty of age-appropriate children's books that some parents may still find objectionable for a variety of reasons, and it is the parents' job, not the booksellers,' to ensure that their children are reading what they deem as appropriate. This bill will not stop children from reading what they want to read. All it will do is allow a select few individuals to decide what everyone can or cannot read and potentially put many stores out of business, thus adding to the strain of an already difficult economy. Please reconsider this bill, let booksellers do their jobs, and let parents choose what their own children can and cannot read, not anyone else's.

Fran Rhodes

True Texas Project

Fort Worth, TX

True Texas Project support this bill to keep obscene materials away from minor children. Urge passage.

Jessica Bross

Self-employed ghostwriter DBA Cider Spoon Stories LLC

Austin, TX

I have been a freelance ghostwriter in Austin for ten years. I help clients write and publish their life stories as books. If this bill passes, it could impact my clients' ability to safely and freely share their stories and perspectives by subjecting them to meritless lawsuits if a parent so much as \*thought\* their child had \*maybe\* accessed material related to someone's life story that the parent deemed "harmful." The reason people write memoirs is to help readers going through similar situations and find/build community with like-minded humans. Let's not censor free and open and productive and beneficial speech.

Lindsey Lane, Ms.  
Sef-Author & Teacher  
Austin, TX

HB 1375 is yet again another attack on freedom of speech and thought and creates a kind of paranoid police state. Is that what you want? Imagine owning a hardware store and not being to display shovels because shovels can be used as a weapon. Of course if you take the logic of this bill to its fullest extent, perhaps we can start holding purveyors of guns liable for any sales which harm people. Books and book stores are repositories of thoughts and experiences for every citizen. Stop this nonsense of over legislating. Thank you.

Mary Lowry  
self--I am a writer.  
Austin, TX

I am writing to ask that you vote against HB 1375 because it would be incredibly bad for well-meaning small businesses that do so much for our communities. It is already illegal to sell minors legally harmful material. But in creating a civil cause of action, this bill virtually guarantees frivolous lawsuits filed against bookstores to chill speech. If someone merely thinks their child has been "harmed" by accessing a book they deem harmful, they can file a suit against a bookseller. Whether or not such a suit is ultimately successful, the time and expense of opposing it is beyond what any small business owner can take on. In practice, many of these suits result in settlement regardless of the merits of the claim. It thus becomes a bounty bill that someone can use to seek "damages" when no damage has been done in hopes of intimidating someone into a settlement. It can also be a way for someone to harass a bookstore they don't like. If passed this bill will result in many junk lawsuits against small businesses. Please vote NO! Thank you!

Lori Stephens  
The Authors Guild  
Richardson, TX

The Authors Guild strongly opposes House Bill 1375, which would subject Texas bookstores and other legitimate businesses to frivolous and potentially ruinous lawsuits under the guise of protecting minors. It is already illegal in Texas to sell harmful material to minors. This bill would allow any individual who personally objects to a particular title to sue a bookstore simply for offering it for sale. Even when these suits are clearly meritless, bookstores will have to spend vast sums to defend themselves in court. Faced with this prospect, bookstores will resort to extreme self-censorship, removing any book dealing with sexuality, sexual identity, or other subjects that could be considered controversial, including many classic works of literature. Or, as we have seen in other states, some bookstores may choose to become adults-only, depriving communities of a vital resource through which children can discover a love of reading.

This is clearly antithetical to the First Amendment. Freedom of speech is fundamental to our system of government, and when governmental bodies reduce the availability of speech and voices, it strikes at the First Amendment rights of readers and authors, diminishing our culture as a whole. A healthy democracy vigorous literary debate, a diversity of ideas, and a tolerance for discourse that some find offensive or challenging.

We urge you to reject this unconstitutional legislation.

Kay Farmer  
self  
Houston, TX

Please support these bills to protect TX youth and move them from committee to a vote on the House floor.  
Sincerely,

Kay Farmer

Elizabeth Edelbrock  
The Authors Guild  
Frisco, TX

The Authors Guild strongly opposes House Bill 1375, which would subject Texas bookstores and other legitimate businesses to frivolous and potentially ruinous lawsuits under the guise of protecting minors. It is already illegal in Texas to sell harmful material to minors. This bill would allow any individual who personally objects to a particular title to sue a bookstore simply for offering it for sale. Even when these suits are clearly meritless, bookstores will have to spend vast sums to defend themselves in court. Faced with this prospect, bookstores will resort to extreme self-censorship, removing any book dealing with sexuality, sexual identity, or other subjects that could be considered controversial, including many classic works of literature. Or, as we have seen in other states, some bookstores may choose to become adults-only, depriving communities of a vital resource through which children can discover a love of reading.

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We urge you to reject this unconstitutional legislation.

Polly Downs  
Myself  
Arlington, TX

Vote against this bill. If you don't want to read a book don't read it. Bookstores should be free to sell books without fear of retribution.

Misty Collier  
Mayor candidate  
Amarillo, TX  
Im for this bill

Jake Wilson  
Self - CPA  
Fort Worth, TX

I support HB 1375 relating to civil liability for obscenity. Thank you to Representative Schatzline for authoring HB 1375.

Thank You,  
Jake Wilson  
Fort Worth, TX  
SD9 and HD91

Diana Richards

Self / Retired

Sherman, TX

I support HB1375, because the Miller Test is a 3-pronged test regarding ADULT exposure to obscenity. According to the U.S. Department of Justice (Justice.gov): “It is important to note that the standard for what is harmful to minors may be different than the standard for adults, and offenders convicted of obscenity crimes involving minors face harsher penalties than if the crimes involved only adults.” The Supreme Court obviously feels there is a difference between the harm that is done to an adult’s brain versus a minor’s brain. They simply have not put it into an official ruling yet. I have provided TX lawmakers over the last 2 years with over 200 studies showing research on the harm done to the human (adult) brain. The study subjects are never children, because it is not ethical to experiment on children - especially when they would definitely be harmed. During the Frisco ISD Library Collection Review Project, 71 book titles were removed from their schools listed as “Containing Obscene Content”. Their list is readily available on their ISD website. I appreciate their thorough work to protect TX children from harm. Book sellers who have testified today stating that they do NOT sell “harmful materials to children because it is already against the law” should have no fear of civil lawsuit. If they are not really sure if their collection contains play-by-play, detailed descriptions of sex acts (including rape, incest, bestiality, or necrophilia), maybe they should take that up with the book publishers & American Library Association who actively promote erotica targeting minor children. Maybe they should demand that publishers label the books with a warning that would allow the booksellers to decide if they should even purchase that book for their little shop - or maybe create a special shelf for those adult books. It wouldn’t take much work as is evident in how fast bookstores made special “Banned Books” displays full of books that have never been banned in the State of Texas. Please pass HB1375 favorably out of committee. Thank you for your help in protecting TX children.

Anna Abrahams

Jaco Booyens Ministries

Montgomery, TX

Hello – My name is Anna Abrahams, and I serve as a legislative and policy intern for Jaco Booyens Ministries, an organization dedicated to ending child sexual exploitation and human trafficking through prevention, education, and advocacy. I’m here today to testify in strong support of HB 1375, a bill that takes essential steps to protect minors from harmful and obscene content.

As someone who has worked closely with survivors and advocates in this space—and having personally witnessed the long-term trauma caused by early exposure to pornographic or obscene material—I know how damaging this content can be to a developing child. The normalization of explicit material in digital spaces and the ease with which minors can access it is both alarming and unacceptable.

Many commercial platforms and content distributors have failed to put adequate safeguards in place. They profit off engagement without regard for who is on the other side of the screen. HB 1375 holds these entities accountable. It ensures that those who knowingly make harmful, obscene content accessible to children can no longer hide behind corporate veils or pass the blame down the pipeline.

This is not an attack on free speech. This is a stand for child safety. If a commercial entity is transmitting content that would be considered criminal in a physical setting—images or videos depicting minors in sexualized or abusive contexts—there must be consequences. This bill makes that clear.

At Jaco Booyens Ministries, we see firsthand the role that pornography and obscene content play in grooming, desensitization, and the escalation of abuse. HB 1375 sends a critical message: the protection of children must outweigh the profit margins of those trafficking in digital exploitation.

We cannot allow another child to be harmed while we wait for tech platforms and media distributors to police themselves. We must act.

Please, support HB 1375. Stand with Texas families. And help us take this necessary step in holding bad actors accountable. Thank you for your time and your commitment to protecting the next generation.

Gail Perez  
DO NOT CALIFORNIA my Texas !! Keep out Hollywood  
Killeen, TX  
Keep Hollywood in California

Shannon Ayres  
Citizens Defending Freedom, Self  
Frisco, TX

I am in strong support of this bill. Our children deserve to be protected from those who would provide harmful materials to them and those who provide harmful materials to children should be held accountable. Please pass HB 1375

Minda Anderson  
Self  
Austin, TX

HB 1375 would limit parents' power to purchase whatever books they want by making it harder for small bookstores, and maybe even big box retailers, to sell books someone \*might\* deem "harmful to minors." HB 1375 goes after private retailers, by broadening the circumstances under which a private business may be found commercially liable for damages a person claims they experience if they are exposed to material they deem "harmful to minors." The language in this bill is confusing and hard to follow. But the way it reads to us, is that book banners and other bad actors would have more ground to stand on to bring frivolous claims against retail businesses- private booksellers- in our communities.  
I worry this bill would allow parents who (falsely) claim Shannon Hale's Itty Bitty Kitty Corn and Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye are "harmful to minors" to claim their children are "damaged" by simply being exposed to those books when they walk into a book shop- or a big box store- displaying the books within eye sight or reach of a child. How are local independent bookshops supposed to guarantee a child doesn't accidentally pick up a copy of an adult book that contains sexual content, or a children's book depicting the Virginia Flag- that happens to be on a shelf, or on a display within reach of a child? And isn't monitoring children's behavior and their access to information and books, the job of the parents?

These kinds of lawsuits- even if they're baseless- would expose these beloved small businesses and big box retailers- to costly legal battles that could damage their reputations, ability to do business in our communities, and ultimately drive them out of business, or at least out of Texas. Please do not allow this bill to continue so we can protect book access for Texas kids. Thank you.

Kim Krutka  
Self; educator  
Denton, TX

I am opposed to this bill.

Rebekah Manley  
self  
Midland, TX

Bookstores exist for people and families to explore literature together. Bookstores are small businesses and putting the onus on them to control the content of thousands of books vs. letting parents discuss and purchase books with their kids only leads to an impossible amount of work for stores that are striving to stay open and support their communities. Texas prides itself on supporting businesses and those brave enough to start and run them. Please do not put this obstacle in their overworked path. Please do all you can to support businesses that are supporting our communities.

Lola Hurt  
True Texas Project  
Addison, TX

HB 1375 strengthens enforcement by removing the legal loopholes (obscenity exception) that allow explicit content to be shown in schools. The same content is prohibited in prisons but allowed in schools. Unacceptable!!

Kimberly Galland  
Self/CPA  
Bryan, TX

Vote yes to remove all loopholes and protect our children from vulgar and offensive content in schools. Studies have shown this can lead to addiction and unhealthy behaviors in adulthood. Many sexual offenders were introduced to porn at a young age.

Carlye Rangeo  
Vintage Bookstore  
Austin, TX

The bill is vague and can be easily taken advantage of by serial litigators. Anyone can try and make a quick buck by filing frivolous lawsuits that attack bookstores. The majority of our local bookstores are self financed and cannot afford to defend against people with malicious intent. Bookstores are already working on tight margins and anyone with a grievance against their principles, people, or content can put them out of business using the terminology in this bill. Passing a bill so ambiguous as this is opening the door for litigations that will jeopardize safe common spaces that benefit all members of Texas communities.

Sarah Cypher  
Self, Texas author and business owner  
Austin, TX

Dear Legislators:

I am a Texas author and lifelong business owner whose livelihood would be sharply, negatively impacted if this bill becomes law. As the award-winning writer of queer fiction about ancestry, lineage, and bonds between families, I am proud to see my book on the shelves of queer-friendly bookstores in Austin like BookWoman, The Little Gay Shop, Birdhouse Books and Gifts, and Reverie Books, all which actively promote my fiction to their customers. These stores are lifeblood for writers like me--their staff take personal pride in connecting readers with stories that represent and uplift them. If these bright, welcoming, warm stores have to do business under threat of harassment and litigation, what will happen to their livelihoods--and as local writers, ours?

It is already illegal to sell minors legally harmful material. But in creating a civil cause of action, this bill virtually guarantees frivolous lawsuits filed against bookstores to chill speech. If someone merely thinks their child has been "harmed" by accessing a book they deem harmful, they can file a suit against a bookseller.

Whether or not such a suit is ultimately successful, the time and expense of opposing it is beyond what any small business owner can take on. In practice, many of these suits result in settlement regardless of the merits of the claim. It thus becomes a bounty bill that someone can use to seek "damages" when no damage has been done in hopes of intimidating someone into a settlement. It can also be a way for someone to harass a bookstore they don't like.

At stake is your ability to display classics like Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, and Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* — not because these books are harmful to minors, but because they are frequently targeted by book banners. It also jeopardizes the ability to display LGBTQIA2S+ books like Maia Kobabe's *Gender Queer* and Allison Bechdel's *Fun Home*, which are frequently targeted for bans and would likely be hit with junk lawsuits.

Thank you for considering the full impact of this ill-conceived bill and voting against it.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Cypher

Mark Smith

Self

Austin, TX

I am opposed to this bill. First the legislature sought to restrict content in school libraries, then public libraries, and now bookstores? This bill represents a blatant restriction of freedom of speech and an intentional attempt to censor books that can be bought and sold in bookstores. This is not a serious attempt to protect children, it is an attempt to introduce censorship and government control into the marketplace of ideas. It would be struck down in a minute by the most conservative courts in the country. Please do not vote this bill out of committee.

Genevieve Lillibridge

The Twig Book Shop

San Antonio, TX

The Twig Book Shop is a destination in San Antonio, for locals and tourists, having been in business over 50 years. Our little bookstore hosts events for local and regional authors, partners with multiple school districts for author visits, provides books for numerous offsite events, and provides books for school book fairs across the city. In addition, we have story time every Friday with Miss A, who is so popular that children recognize her and chase her down when they see her around town. We are a vital part of the San Antonio community.

The idea that any local, independent bookstore might be put in a position of defending itself in court because a parent doesn't like the contents of a book their child purchased at the bookstore is preposterous. Given that the profit margins in the book world are small to begin with, even one lawsuit would very likely cause that bookstore to have to close, thus depriving a community of a much needed, highly valued, and beloved resource.

HB 1375 would completely change the climate and culture of independent bookstores. How would we protect ourselves from frivolous and meritless lawsuits? Would we have to card customers as they come in the door? Refuse to sell certain books to children, teenagers, and young adults? Remove books from our shelves? All of this seems like a very clear violation of the First Amendment. Are we really going to head down that path?

Independent bookstores are a foundation of our society. They foster creativity, encourage exploration, curiosity, civic engagement, conversation, and build community. HB 1375 would completely alter the landscape of bookstores and communities. It would create a culture of fear and distrust, which are already rampant in our world. I strongly encourage House members to vote against this very ill-conceived and unnecessary bill.

Kristie Rutledge

Self

Rockport, TX

Chair and Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 1375. The Texas legislature must pass good laws to protect children from obscene materials. Please pass this bill out of committee right away in time for calendars and full passage. Delays are not acceptable.

Respectfully,

Kristie Rutledge

Barbara Craig-Schniepp

myself - retired teacher

Corpus Christi, TX

Please think carefully before passing HB1375 out of committee. Leave decisions on what books are available in bookstores up to the store owners and their customers. I especially value small independent bookstores, and HB1375 could pave the way to lawsuits against them for carrying a book a single person deems damaging to a child. (In my experience, children are always accompanied by an adult in small bookstores anyway. Let the parents monitor and decide.)

Jennifer Franz  
Self librarian  
Grapevine, TX

I am a librarian here in TX who does not support HB 1375. This bill is crazy. Bookstores and libraries are magical places for children, and reading is one of the many ways they learn about the world around them. Letting some random person sue a bookstore because they don't like what their child saw is such a crazy idea. Books show you someone else's lived experience. Independent bookstores give you access to local authors and experiences that would not otherwise be available. Books teach children about empathy and allow them to live in someone else's shoes. I'd much rather a child or teen read about a difficult situation and discuss it with their parents/family rather than experiencing it and not knowing what to do. The world is full of complex things, and reading helps navigate it. Penalizing bookstores will have such a negative impact on local Texas communities. And who decides what's obscene?? Please do not vote for this bill and leave bookstores alone.

Deborah Sizemore, Mrs.  
Self / retired editor  
Crowley, TX

As an avid reader, a writer, and a retired editor, I've been watching the rise of book challenges and book bans in our public schools and public libraries with ever-deepening concern. Some say I "don't need to worry" about censorship in schools and libraries because I can still buy any book I want from a bookstore. But HB 1375 appears to be aimed at intimidating booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book-banners. No one has the right to interfere with my ability to shop for books. HB 1375 would make it harder for small, locally owned bookstores, and maybe even big-box retailers, to sell books that somebody \*might\* deem "harmful to minors." HB 1375 goes after private retailers, by broadening the circumstances under which a private business may be found liable for damages a person claims they "experience" if they are exposed to material they deem "harmful to minors." The language in this bill is confusing, and it opens up our beloved local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Please don't vote HB 1375 out of committee. Please oppose this harmful bill, and join me in defending the freedom to read. Remember: There has never been a time when the book-banners were the good guys.

Amanda Place  
Self  
Spring, TX

This bill will only serve to endanger and threaten booksellers and bookstores for doing their jobs: selling books to people who want and need them. It is an excuse for ultra conservatives to punish booksellers for selling materials they disagree with; it has nothing to do with protecting children/minors as it is already illegal to sell obscene materials to them.

Tami Brown Rodriquez  
Jaco Booyens Ministries  
Dallas, TX

Testimony for HB 1375 – Presented by Tami Brown Rodriquez

My name is Tami Brown Rodriguez. I am a survivor of child sexual abuse and exploitation—and a family member of a survivor who was trafficked for 15 years. I now advocate for legislation that stops the exploitation of children before it begins—and that’s exactly why I’m asking you to support HB 1375.

This bill addresses a reality many still avoid: obscenity is being pushed on our children not just by strangers, but by systems—through schools, apps, and platforms that lack accountability.

I’ve worked with survivors whose exploitation began not with a predator, but with content. It started with a book in a school library, a school-issued device, or a digital app assigned as homework. That exposure desensitized them, broke down their boundaries, and opened the door for grooming—by peers, teachers, even online predators.

My niece Dakota was one of those kids. For ten years, we didn’t know where she was. She was sold for drugs, forced into sex acts, and lived on the streets. All of it began with what she was exposed to in school—content that was normalized by the very place meant to protect her. In March, Dakota turned 31—and for the first time in a decade, we knew she was safe.

But it’s not just schools. It’s big tech. Third-party curriculum vendors. Streaming services. Commercial publishers. All making obscene content accessible to children—with no consequence.

HB 1375 finally gives families a civil path to justice. It holds accountable not just individuals—but institutions and shareholders who profit from distributing obscenity to minors.

Arkansas, Missouri, Florida, Tennessee, and Utah have already passed legislation to repeal this harmful exemption. Six other states never adopted it in the first place.

It’s time for Texas to stand with them. There is no anti-trafficking strategy that works without addressing early exposure.

Please vote yes on HB 1375. Protection should never be optional. Justice should never be out of reach—for Dakota or for any child in Texas.

Alexandria Lawrence  
Self/Student  
Saginaw, TX

One aspect of this bill that I would like to focus on in this statement is the ability to punish booksellers for the content of a book that is sold. I would like to begin with this statement- It is not the responsibility of a bookseller to restrict what someone reads. If an individual does not want to read something, or have someone in their life read something, it is their responsibility to maintain that. Punishing a bookseller for the content of the books they sell will hurt businesses, the overall economy, and the lives of individuals. This is yet another bill that is being pushed not for protection, as it may be framed, but as yet another act of attempting to control individuals through fear. Fear of what may happen to your employment and freedoms if someone buys a certain book, fear of the people that come in to buy books and their intentions, and fear of financial security in a country that, for many, already carries large degrees of financial insecurity. Beyond this, how would one enforce this, how would this work in a large chain bookstore that has many locations and hundreds of employees throughout the state? Would citizens be responsible for reporting other citizens, and how would that claim be legitimized and not simply pushed forth as an act of spite towards another person. By pushing this bill through, you are going to cause a great deal of harm not only to private citizens who should not have their lives controlled by fear and the government’s opinion of what people should and should not view but also, as previously stated, the greater economy. You will lose employees and businesses that pay taxes and support this state’s economy. You must decide whether control and fear are more important than supporting Texans in their work and businesses. I urge you to vote against this bill and recognize the individuals that you are actively harming.

Daniel Rodriquez, Business Owner

Self

Dallas, TX

Testimony I support HB 1375

My name is Daniel Rodriquez, I am a survivor of sexual abuse! Protecting our underage children is personal to me! I normalized my abuse, thinking (that's what us boys do,)( it's part of experiencing sex,) the female that abused me totally groomed me in believing this was normal! I would to like emphasize we are becoming a society of normalizing sexuality with no boundaries! (I WANT TO CLARIFY IF YOU ARE OF LEAGAL AGE ITS ON YOU TO DECIDE YOUR SEXUAL PLAYGROUND) all of you on this board have Children, Grandchildren, or relatives that are minors! PROTECT THEM... Our country was founded on Christian principles, we were warned by our founding fathers if we stray away from them, our nation will not survive, as they planned. We as a nation are so busy trying to accommodate that latest (shiny penny) in order to gain votes! It's time to draw a line in the sand, be like David face the giant!! Today's giant is sexual immorality! Passing this Bill is the beginning!

I made the trip to DC in January to hear the argument on age verification, "IN THE SUPREME COURT "it's opposition is claiming "freedom of speech " you have to prove age verification on many platforms to date" how is this infringing on freedom of speech?? I call it freedom of shame, actually they want to hide their nakedness/shame like Adam & Eve did when they ate the Apple and were ashamed of their nakedness... welcome to the beginning of our Sin nature... thank you! do the right thing..

Franklin Strong, Dr.

Self

Austin, TX

As a parent and one of the co-founders of the Texas Freedom to Read Project, I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB1375. Bookstores in Texas are not making available to minors material the meets the legal definitions of "obscene" or "harmful to minors," so this bill serves no real purpose and fixes no real problem. It does, however, serve as one more tool that can be used to intimidate booksellers and thereby censor material--which is its intent. The bill would encourage frivolous lawsuits against bookstores and make it harder for the independent bookstores that so many of our communities love to do their work. Texas parents want our children to grow up readers and to experience the wonders of literature and the magic of bookstores. We do not need this overreaching, censorious, and damaging bill. Please vote against it.

Laura Hughes

Self, Bookseller and bookstore owner

Houston, TX

I am a bookstore owner, and am also the mother of a 5-year old. This bill will cause undue burden to me as a business owner, and will also limit my ability as a parent and citizen to freely visit other places where books are sold. There are already laws prohibiting the sale of obscene material to minors. As a bookseller and parent, I am conscientious of the law and am committed to only selling appropriate material to minors. Because our store is small, we are able to engage directly and fully with anyone who comes into our store, and to direct minors to books that have appropriate material. But this bill would allow anyone who even suspects a minor has come into contact with harmful material (a designation that is vague in this bill) to file a lawsuit against a business owner or bookseller. Such a lawsuit could be brought without regard to common community standards of what is considered harmful. The cost of such a lawsuit would be destructive for our small business, and legal fees alone could force us to close, and our employees to lose their jobs. Preventing this type of frivolous lawsuit would require us to close our doors to minors, which would also be massively detrimental to our business, as our sales of children's books represents about 10% of our revenue, and most of these sales are from families coming in with their children. We would also have to cut our children's storytime programming, which has been hugely successful and has brought partnerships with local organizations such as the French Consulate and a local press.

As a parent, this bill would likely mean that my daughter would not be able to come with me to visit other bookstores, as they too would be likely to close their doors to minors to protect themselves from frivolous lawsuits enabled by this proposed bill. It is important to me to be able to introduce my daughter to bookstores as part of her cultural education. This proposed bill would limit my ability as a parent to circulate freely with my daughter in cultural sites that are important to me as a parent responsible for the education of my child.

Hellen Baridon  
Myself  
Gun Barrel City, TX

Parents need to start parenting instead of restricting and controlling small businesses. It's not the public's job to raise a child.  
VOTE NO!

Megan Okonsky  
Megan Okonsky  
Austin, TX

I oppose this bill.

Angelique Gonzalez-Page  
Self  
Austin, TX

My name is Angelique Gonzalez-Page and I am against HB 1375. I am concerned by these latest round of proposed bills that criminalize librarians, library staff, book owners and their employees. I think there is a big difference between what you find in a book store versus what you find in an adult book store. Believe me as a former child of the 80's and 90's I scoured books stores and libraries for content that was provocative or "obscene" but all I found was art books, health books and National Geographic magazines. Honestly, I found "obscene" content in people's houses as a baby sitter and visiting my friend's houses after school. Now with the internet, you will find all the good stuff online. So, I feel that this law is designed to chip away at our civil liberties one piece at a time. It is designed to make us distrust our neighbors. It is designed to take away parental responsibility towards our children under the guise that it protects them. Humans are social creatures and what Snovid here in Austin taught me is that we need our neighbors to survive. The government did come out and fixed my burst water pipe but my neighbor did. So, please stop going after my neighbors and please let parents do their jobs concerning our children being exposed to "obscene" materials. As parents we can not prevent our children from seeing and experiencing the world but we can help them process it and respond to it appropriately. Thank you for your time.

AHMAD HERNANDEZ  
Self  
Richmond, TX

My name is Ahmad Hernandez, and I am one of your constituents from Richmond (zip code 77406), and I urge you to oppose House Bill 1375. I have been an educator for 15 years, and I recently taught "Fahrenheit 451" by Ray Bradbury. I've been watching the rise of book challenges and book bans in our Texas public schools and public libraries for the past several years, and have been assured that I don't need to worry, because I can still buy the books from the bookstore. HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries. This bill seems to have missed the central theme of "Fahrenheit 451"--the dangers of censorship. Please don't interfere with my family's ability to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools, by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Please don't vote for HB 1375.

Julia Erickson  
Self  
Rockwall, TX

Support this Bill and protect families and children.

Beth Christopherson, Mrs

self

Houston, TX

Please reject HB 1375. This kind of law would make bookstores close their doors to minors because the law is so vague and frightening. Houston is so blessed to have boutique bookstores with wonderful story times for children. These wonderful community events will likely cease if HB 1375 is passed. The premise of this draconian law is that books are "grooming" children. This is completely false. Books provide education and let kids of diverse backgrounds know that they have the right to exist and to have fulfilling lives. HB 1375 is an embarrassment to Texas, to science, to our history, and to quality education. The only ethical and Constitution-based action to take is to vote against it.

Sanobar Wilkins

Self

The Colony, TX

I am writing in strong opposition to HB1375. This bill is a threat to the freedom of speech and the constitutional right to access books and materials. This bill is an attempt at banning more books in our state with threats against book sellers who don't comply with removing certain books from stores. These books have been targeted for too long in our state. Please don't take away my right to access books in bookstores and libraries. If a parent doesn't want their child to access a particular book in a bookstore, then it is their responsibility to watch over their child. This should not be the job of bookstores, and their merchandise shouldn't be determined by who might stumble across it. Please vote against HB1375.

Cameron Samuels

Self

Katy, TX

Against this bill

Carolyn Cohagan

self

Austin, TX

This bill is nothing but an excuse to censor any content the right finds offensive and to shut down any bookstore that disagrees with them. It is an egregious form of suppression that will harm children and not help them. If you want to keep children safe then pass stricter gun laws.

Anne Russey

Texas Freedom to Read Project and self

Katy, TX

Texas Freedom to Read Project is a parent-founded parent-led organization which advocates against book bans and censorship and for the freedom to read in Texas.

Over the past five years, as Texas parents like us have raised concerns about books being restricted and removed from our children's public schools and our local municipal libraries, we've been told that we need not worry- that the books are not being "banned" because parents can still purchase all of the challenged and removed books at the local bookstore, or through an online retailer.

Now HB 1375 would limit Texan's ability to purchase books from local bookstores and online retailers. The bill threatens to make it harder for small bookstores, and maybe even big box retailers, to sell books that someone \*might\* deem "harmful to minors."

HB 1375 appears to go after private retailers by broadening the circumstances under which a private business may be found commercially liable for damages a person claims they- or presumably their minor children- may experience if they are exposed to material they deem "harmful to minors."

The language in HB 1375 is extremely confusing and hard to follow. But the way it reads to us is that book banners and other bad actors would have more ground to stand on to bring frivolous claims against retail businesses- private booksellers- in our communities.

We worry this bill would allow parents who (falsely) claim Shannon Hale's Itty Bitty Kitty Corn and Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye are "harmful to minors" to claim their children are "damaged" by simply being exposed to those books when they walk into a book shop- or a big box store- if the store displays the books within eyesight or reach of a child.

How are local independent bookshops supposed to guarantee a child doesn't accidentally pick up or lay eyes on a copy of one of these books that happens to be within reach or view inside a store? And isn't monitoring our children's behavior and their access to information and books our job as parents anyways?

These kinds of lawsuits- even if they're baseless- would expose these beloved small businesses and big box retailers to costly legal battles that could damage their reputations and ability to do business in our communities, and ultimately drive them out of business in Texas.

For these reasons, and with these concerns, the parents of Texas Freedom to Read Project respectfully stand against HB 1375 and ask our elected representatives to do the same.

Eve Myers

self

Tomball, TX, TX

Our family includes a gay couple who raised their daughter in a same-sex parent household. Their daughter struggled for years because the books in her school and school library did not include families like hers. At least, however, her parents and our family could find books that were inclusive in book stores. Now, it appears that the rights of families to find books that meet their needs will be threatened by even more censorship of booksellers. It's one thing to put laws on the books available in schools and public libraries. But bookstores should not be restricted from selling books that families and individuals want to buy. All too often, the words "obscene" or "objectionable" are applied to books that simply are different from one person's point of view, and not explicit or graphic portrayals of sexual activity. Parents and individuals should retain the right to purchase the books that they want to read, and parents should have the right to decide which books are appropriate for their children--NOT the Texas state legislature! Guess what, no bookseller is forcing ANYONE to buy a particular book! This law would also open up booksellers to potentially frivolous lawsuits. Please respect our Constitutional right to free speech and do NOT vote this bill out of committee!

Channa Cobble

Parent

Palestine, TX

My name is Channa Cobble, and I oppose HB 1375. As a parent, I believe families have the right to set their own boundaries when it comes to the content their children consume. Therefore, the responsibility should fall on the parent, not the business, to monitor the books their children read.

Catherine Roots

Self

Whitehouse, TX

I encourage you all to pass this bill. This is another line of defense to give our children back their innocence. It is disheartening that our world deems it okay to display sex "toys" near candy or where it is easily accessible to kids. Please be a powerful force for common sense and pass this bill.

Matthew Ikenberry

Self, analyst

Austin, TX

I do not support this bill. Book stores should not be made collateral damage of political tactics.

Sarah Parker

Self; Editorial Director & Writer

Austin, TX

This bill is vague and can be easily taken advantage of by serial litigators. Anyone can try and make a quick buck by filing frivolous lawsuits that attack bookstores. The majority of bookstores are small, local, and self financed; they cannot afford to defend themselves in court from people with malicious intent. Bookstores are already working on tight margins and anyone with a grievance against their principles, people, or content can put them out of business using the terminology in this bill. Protect small businesses from bad actors.

Rose Smith

self

Austin, TX

Texas is a state where small businesses, locally owned businesses should be protected against frivolous lawsuits likely to be brought by politically/culturally motivated citizens. The standard for what someone thinks is harmful is subjective. The standard for what is legally harmful to minors is not subjective. It is already illegal to sell minors legally harmful material. The laws are clear and they should be enforced by trained and professional enforcement. We do not need to add to the burden of small businesses the fear of random lawsuits. This is a fundamental expansion of governmental overreach. This law forces the courts to take cases without Standing (a lack of particularized harm.) It does this at the expense not just of individual freedoms but at the expense of our economic system in which businesses (particularly small businesses) should be allowed to operate without aggrandized governmental oversight, overreach and influence.

Teresa Kenney  
Village Books  
The Woodlands, TX, TX

I am reaching out to voice my opposition to HB 1375 which will be heard during the Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee hearing on Wednesday. The rise of book challenges and book bans in Texas public schools and public libraries is concerning—but this bill takes book banning to an entirely new level, opening small business owners up to repeated frivolous lawsuits by individuals determined to control what others can and cannot read. Oftentimes those looking to censor books note that it is not a "ban" because you can still purchase the books they are censoring from private businesses. This bill will change that. It seems designed to frighten and prevent retailers from carrying books that could be deemed "harmful" by anyone in the community, regardless of the validity of those claims. I work with my customers to ensure that their child receives a book that they, as caregivers, feel comfortable with and that their child will enjoy. For some that may mean a book with no magic. For others it may mean a book with diverse characters that mirror their own life experiences. Please don't interfere with the ability of families to purchase books they want to read. Please don't open retailers and small businesses up to frivolous lawsuits. Small businesses are the foundation of our communities. Please don't vote HB 1375 out of committee.

Sheryl Millar  
Self/retired  
Commerce, TX

This bill has absolutely no merit and no reason to proceed. If a person is bothered by a book or a product for sale, then DON'T READ IT or buy it. It's very simple. One person should not be able to file a suit against a store merely because they don't like their merchandise. It's ludicrous and a waste of legislators' time.

Laura Brownlee  
self - parent  
Richardson, TX

Please reconsider this bill - let booksellers do their jobs, and let parents choose what their own children can and cannot read. This bill will open up booksellers to be the target of anyone who has a personal agenda based on what they believe children should and should not be reading. In a state that touts "parental rights," that should extend to retail outlets as well. If a parent is concerned with what their children are purchasing, they should supervise them while the purchase is being made and be informed about the contents. It is the parent's job to determine what is appropriate for their child. What is appropriate for one child may not be the same as what is appropriate for another child of the same age.

Sharron Turner  
retired allied medical person  
Glen Rose, TX

I do not support the bill 1375 and it's attempt to place responsibility of book store owners to shield children from subject matter that might be considered obscene. This is a responsibility of the parent to select the information they want to decide what is obscene and to control what book stores they allow their children to enter. This bill will sensor book stores in a way that that limits book content that should be up to the buyer and or parents. I do not support this bill.

Clara Moltz  
Self  
Lipan, TX

As a parent I recognize my own right to determine what is appropriate for my child. This bill would put that power in the hands of other persons. It would be another way for others to apply their personal beliefs to my family through creating unnecessary risk of litigation for booksellers. It is difficult to understand how a state that touts its love of liberty would be so willing to place this workaround of a book ban across the state. Consider that each family is different. Consider that what works for mine may not work for yours and vice versa. Consider that I should not have the authority to press my will upon other families and how they parent their children, aside from when an immediate risk is present, and other families should not be able to influence how I would parent my own children. This bill would allow others to parent my children, and that is my responsibility.

Charlotte Northrip

Self

Weatherford, TX

I am AGAINST HB 1375. As a Texas native, a mother, and an avid reader since childhood, I believe it is the parents' responsibility to monitor what their children are reading. This bill could potentially do irreparable damage to small bookstores and business owners across the state. This bill is needless and restrictive.

Kayla Cobble

Self

Austin, TX

My name is Kayla Cobble. I'm writing to express my opposition to HB 1375.

For better or worse, the United States primarily operates as a free market economy, especially in regard to consumer goods; and a free market economy is defined by an absence of government intervention. The fact that this bill would permit individuals to bring a civil suit against bookstores, which are private businesses, contradicts the collective agreement we have all entered into as United States citizens to decide for ourselves what products we consume and from what companies we purchase them.

As stated above, one of the theoretical advantages of the free market is consumer choice. An individual is at liberty to shop at, or purchase from, any business they deem suitable or find agreeable to them. If a consumer finds a company does not sell products aligned with their particular values, they have the right, and as it applies to parents, the responsibility, to find another business to patronize.

The United States is considered by many to be the land of opportunity, the place where individuals can start their own companies in an effort to achieve economic stability and upward mobility. Allowing private parties to file lawsuits against entities like independent bookstores, which maintain relatively low profit margins, would be financially devastating to small business owners.

It would also be a disservice for their customers if: (1) due to vague guidelines as to what qualifies as obscenity, the variety or availability of products decreased; (2) due to apprehensions over legal action, businesses banned minors due to an inability to hire additional staff to sort and classify potentially harmful materials; or (3) due to the expense of compound civil suits, or the lack of profitable merchandise, the company ceased to operate entirely.

Personally, I also have concerns that, due to the religious background of the author of this bill, the definition of offensive content will be biased if it is based on spiritual or personal definitions of obscenity. Should this be the case, I fear there will be dire consequences for LGBTQ literature specifically, as novels featuring queer characters are frequent targets of various forms of censorship, and could present a commercial liability for the small, independent bookstores that carry them.

In conclusion, I believe HB 1375 would have negative economical consequences for private businesses and the customers who voluntarily frequent them, particularly those who value unlimited access to literature. It is also not a sensible bill for Texas families, because while it may be true that parents have the right to determine what their own children can read, they do not have the authority to dictate what other children can read. Therefore, I strongly urge the committee to vote against this bill.

Gina Griffith  
Bookstores  
Granbury, TX

I am writing about Bill HB375 which seeks to impose civil liability on individuals and entities for the distribution, transmission, or display of material deemed "obscene" to minors. Yes, we do not want our children to have access to what we deem obscene, but the definition of obscene varies from person to person. What some may deem appropriate, others may not. It seems that some of the more overzealous seem to want to do away with any material featuring people of color, people of the LGBTQ+ community, and other marginalized individuals. This will put an unfair burden on the small business owners, the owners of these bookstores. Because book banning is such a hot issue in this state, this will open up booksellers to be the target of anyone who has a personal agenda based on what they believe children should or should not be reading. Furthermore, it should be the parents who determine what their children buy to read, which does not mean a book store shouldn't be required to not sell books to anyone just because certain people may have extreme prejudice against marginalized groups. This is a slippery slope, and is slipping towards extreme government overreach, which is thought the party in power was trying to avoid, Government Overreach. There are far more dangerous things that our children face on a day to day basis, such as an abundance of school shootings, than what books are sold at bookstores.

I oppose this bill, because it puts an added burden on small bookstores which are already struggling in today's climate, and will lead to expensive and unnecessary lawsuits further burdening our court. Book Banning is a dangerous precedent that further takes away rights of citizens and small business owners and employees. My daughter works in a book store in another state, and it's her dream of owning a book store, but if this bill passes the chances of her moving back to Texas are 0. Please reconsider this bill.

Rachel Toalson  
Self  
San Antonio, TX

Hi there! My name is Rachel Toalson. I live in San Antonio, Texas.

I'm writing you to voice my opposition to HB 1375 that will be heard by Rep. LaHood during the Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee hearing today.

I've been watching the rise of book challenges and bans here in Texas for a while. As a Texas-based author and a mother who believes in the power of books to change and save lives and open minds and hearts, I am deeply concerned about the efforts being made to handicap Texas schools and public libraries and keep books out of the hands of my kids.

The reply we concerned citizens often get to our concerns is, "Oh, don't worry. You'll still be able to buy those books from the bookstore." But now, with HB 1375 on the table, that appears to be a right we'll possibly lose. HB 1375 appears to scare booksellers out of stocking and selling the kinds of books that have been so relentlessly targeted by book banners crying for their removal from school and public libraries. What about my right to let my children read what I want them to read? Where will I be able to find the challenged and banned books, if not in a bookstore? How can one group of people speak for all people? How can one group of people revoke the rights of every individual in a state? That goes against everything our state and our country stand for.

Please don't interfere with my family's ability to buy the books we can't find in our libraries by opening up bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Please don't vote HB 1375 out of committee.

Thank you for your time.

Warmly,  
Rachel Toalson

Gretchen Pruett

Self - Retired

Kyle, TX

I oppose this bill as it is already in statute that these entities cannot have obscene materials available in their locations. HB 1375 goes after private retailers, by broadening the circumstances under which a private business may be found commercially liable for damages a person claims they experience if they are exposed to material they deem "harmful to minors." The language in this bill is confusing and hard to follow.

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Hearing Date: April 23, 2025 8:00 AM

Michele Wallace, Mrs.

Self

Waxahachie, TX

In favor of this bill

Sharon Tryon, Mrs

Self

Waxahachie, TX

I support this bill

Heather Bielling

The Twig Bookshop

San Antonio, TX

Please vote NO on this bill. This is a ridiculous and harmful attempt at censorship under the pretense of protecting minors. Bookstores and Libraries are meant to be a safe and welcoming place for everyone, especially kids. The books we sell are meant to be available to everyone even if they don't appeal to everyone. Our first amendment guarantees our rights to free speech and that includes the written word. Bookstores are including all kinds of different voices on their shelves because diversity is important. If people don't like it they don't have to shop here. They don't get to dictate what can be sold or read by others. If they have issues with what their children might access then they should have a conversation with their children about certain content and topics. This is only going to invite frivolous lawsuits that small businesses can't afford. I'm sick and tired of republican fascists. You guys don't care about children or protecting children. You just want to have power and control everyone. If you have even a shred of decency in you, vote NO. Stop ignoring the constitution. Stop being fascists.

Haley Bartholow

Self, Office Manager of a CPA firm

Granbury, TX

I used to manage a Barnes & Noble. The pornographic magazines were wrapped in plastic and left on the shelf same as all other media, except it was the top shelf so you had to be "tall" enough to reach it. That worked perfectly fine for my entire career at that company. Isn't this legislation proposing to regulate something that is already illegal? If you don't want your kids to read certain materials, don't let them visit that section of the store. Why is it the booksellers job to parent your kids? I thought this was the land of freedom, including free speech and this was the party against more government regulation. We can all agree to disagree and still live together without constantly making up new ways to bankrupt small business. For heavens sake, anything we felt was too risky to keep in the shelves we either put behind the front desk and it could be requested by a customer or special ordered instead. There are already a dozen ways to "protect" your kids here without more legislation. How is this helping anyone???

Amie Nguyen

self

Leander, TX

Do not pass this HB! Every person has the right to access any and all information. This is restricting minors from engaging free will and critical thinking, which are essential skills to have during this age period. Sheltering kids will only make them ignorant, uneducated, and unprepared.

Devanshi Mathur

Self - BookPeople employee

Austin, TX

I am strongly urging you all to vote against HB 1375. First - this bill is trying to make a huge deal out of a problem that does not exist. Parents and families are already making decisions on what their children should be able to read, regardless of what stores and libraries carry. All this bill is doing is taking a person's right away from making decisions for themselves and their families. There is no problem right now, so why are you making problems in an environment where everything is fine? You are creating a fake issue in order to take away a population's right to literature and their right to read.

Secondly, this will have the most negative impact on your local economy. I am sure that we can all agree that we want a flourishing local economy, one that benefits its community members. All that this will do destroy the local literary economy that Texas has worked so hard to build. It will make it near impossible for bookstores to stay in business with unnecessary hoops that they will now have to jump through just to be open. Who is going to sort through the millions of book titles for these bookstores? Who is going to do the work of dividing these small business into two separate stores - adult and kids? All that will be happening is that you will be eradicating your local bookstore and library scene from your community, and you will have to be held responsible for that. There is NO WAY that this bill will nor harm your local community economies. I say this as someone who has worked with bookstores for three years, for a bookstore that employees a significant number of people, and can see our business suffer greatly if this bill goes into effect.

Third, this bill makes it unclear as to what is exactly "obscenity" and who will be the people deciding that. As I said earlier, families are already making the decisions for their children on what is appropriate for them. I do not trust a select few people to make proper decisions for the entirety of the state. This is not an issue that needs to be criminalized, and this is not an issue that needs such surveillance. There is no oversight that will prevent certain religions, cultures, identities from being marked as obscene. This will basically allow a small group of people to dictate what the rest of the population has access to without any way fighting against them without retaliation. How is it that we will have stricter laws regarding what **BOOKS KIDS CAN READ** than gun violence, domestic violence, and environmental violence? This is genuinely a transparent attempt to obtain more power from the people Texas governs, rather than trying to serve the Texan population.

To reiterate, this bill should not be passed because the problem it is trying to address does not exist in real life, it will detrimentally hurt businesses all across Texas, and places unnecessary power in the hands of the government over access to literature.

Kara Page

Self

Lubbock, TX

It is up to the parents where they allow their children to shop. Creating this level and type of liability for small businesses will cause undue harm.

Andrea Jares, RN

self, registered nurse

Pearland, TX

Vote "no" on this bill. This bill is clearly anti-small business. I have two children and I encourage them to read, instead of using social media. The role of parenting children and dictating moral standards should be on the parent, not the government. This bill would unnecessarily punish booksellers (small businesses in neighborhoods) for selling literature and well-regarded writing.

Connie Hawkins, Mrs

Myself

Cedar Park, TX

Leave book stores alone!

I'm so tired of the party and power policing every aspect of everyone's life... I thought they were the party for the people in the party of less government. This is bad for business if you wanna look at it from my money standpoint as well. We have so many more important things on the table in regards to what's going on in this world... this is not one of them

Kim O'Quinn

Self

Houston, TX

This bill would end up putting many smaller bookstores out of business when they are struggling already. If a parent wants to monitor what their child is reading then so be it. I do not want the government dictating what is obscene and what isn't. This is complete government overreach.

Sheyla Rideaux

Self

HOUSTON, TX

This bill does more damage by putting bookstores at risk of having to put restrictions to minors in accessing their stores. Bookstores should not have to live in fear, this bill should not pass

Megan LaGray

Self

Leander, TX

This could cause small business book store owners to lose their businesses, which in term causes negative effects on local economies. Please don't pass this, it's a terrible idea.

Ava Damri

Self

Eules, TX

This bill will lead to frivolous lawsuits and will be hurt small businesses across the state. It's already illegal for sell harmful materials to minors. This is not a law that can be enforced easily will lead to a significant drain for businesses that create jobs in the local economy.

Dani Brymer

Self

Liberty Hill, TX

"If this bill passes, this would severely negatively impact local bookstores and encourage further censorship and book bans. This would not enable nor encourage supporting educated individuals in our society."

Melanie Sweeney Bowen

Self

Spring, TX

I oppose HB1375, which purports to protect minors from access to unsuitable content, but which will surely open the floodgates for frivolous lawsuits, invite the intimidation of book store owners to censor their inventory, and impede the success of these small business owners. It is not far-fetched to think that this may result in minors being banned from bookstores or stores having to card their patrons. Ultimately, there is so little need for this legislation that its supposed benefit is not worth the headache or the damage sure to be done to these small businesses.

As a parent, I consider it my own responsibility to know where my kids go, what they purchase, and what they consume. I don't rely on private businesses to do this. Furthermore, I wouldn't want my children's access to books (or my own) to be censored based on the opinions of whatever citizens might use this as an opportunity to push their own agenda of banning historically targeted texts. Those texts included classic and award-winning works with great artistic and educational merit.

I am also a nationally bestselling author whose livelihood relies on sales in Texas bookstores. My books are written for adults with adult themes and content. Should someone deem them unsuitable for minors and bring a lawsuit against a bookstore for selling them where a minor could conceivably access them, they might be intimidated to stop selling my books at their store. Books are already categorized by age appropriateness, and any concerned guardian can easily research the content in the books their children may wish to consume. Booksellers can and will also provide that information upon request.

I am absolutely not convinced that this legislation solves a real, worthy problem, nor that the problem it supposedly addresses is in the state government's purview, and therefore, the other consequences of this legislation should be weighted and considered accordingly. Private, small business shouldn't be put in the position of fighting frivolous lawsuits or having their business targeted with intimidation tactics meant to threaten financial ruin if they won't adhere to unfettered censorship. Most small businesses cannot afford to fight such legal battles. This legislation is anti-freedom and anti-Texas, and it will do far more harm than good. Booksellers, readers, authors, and parents do not want this.

Joanne Richards

self

Austin, TX

I am opposed to HB 1375. It is already illegal to sell minors harmful material. This bill creates an unneeded civil cause of action. This legislative session we have seen more bills that increase civil and criminal penalties in almost all areas of life! All of these bills, including this one, has a chilling effect on free speech. This attack on our first amendment rights of free speech has got to stop. Vote against HB 1375.

Karen Bone

Self - research administrator

Magnolia, TX

I am against this bill since it would allow anyone to bring civil suit against bookstores and other commercial entities, seeking damages if a minor accessed content deemed "harmful to minors." It could force bookstores to close their doors to minors and card people at the door. As a parent, it is MY job to review what they look at buy, not the state's.

Diane Mayes

Patchouli Joe's Books & Indulgences

KRUGERVILLE, TX

I was born and raised in Texas and have owned a bookstore in Denton, TX for four years. I love Texas and being a part of our community.

In July each year Patchouli Joe's hosts a Find Waldo event where a cardboard Waldo is hid in 24 business around town. As children and adults find Waldo their card is stamped in order to win prizes. This helps businesses in town get business as well as provide a sense of community and summer fun.

Our bookstore also hosts author events, poetry readings, writing workshops and more. We not only host events in our store but also bring books to events hosted by the universities in town and public and private schools. Once a year we put on a large festival for independently published and self published authors to sell their books.

We also work closely with the Rotary Clubs to help them provide books to Cook Children's Hospital, a children's museum, and the local ISD. We provide a discount to help them purchase books for all incoming Preschool and Kindergarten students in Denton ISD.

As an independent bookstore we don't make a profit but we have been able to stay alive. However, if HB 1375 passes we won't survive. This bill allows anyone to file a lawsuit on any book they see as unfit. There are no guidelines other than "harmful to minors". What books would these be? Would it be classics like "Slaughter House 5"? or would it be "Pinkalicious"?, which was banned recently in Tennessee. The wording is so vague that it could be any book on our shelves. The way this bill is written could tangle us up in lawsuits that we cannot afford to fight. We would have no other option than to close our doors. This could also be the fate of all other bookstores in the state.

Dawn Filer Ciranna

Self, Small Business Owner

Leander, TX

My name is Dawn, and I am the proud owner of Next Chapter Books & Bookmobile, an independent pop-up bookstore specializing in gently used books. For nearly three years, I have dedicated myself to providing affordable books at half the retail price. My customer demographic is primarily female, with 70% women and 65% mothers.

The passage of HB 1375 would immediately jeopardize my small business. As the sole bookseller, it would impose an overwhelming burden that I could neither manage nor enforce. I actively partner with local schools, the school district, and fellow small businesses to sell books, and I also participate in significant community events, such as the Park and Trails Foundation of Cedar Park's Earth Day Celebration, the Old Town Leander Street Festival, and the Old Town Leander Christmas Festival. These events attract hundreds of families and visitors over several hours each day.

If HB 1375 moves forward, I will struggle to display my products and monitor event participants legally and effectively. As a working mother with elementary-aged children, I lack the time and resources to defend against frivolous lawsuits that could arise, which might force me to close my business. HB 1375 would drastically limit access to affordable books in our community, where we do not have a brick-and-mortar bookstore. It would deter other booksellers from establishing themselves in our city, county, and state. It is crucial for the well-being of our community that we support local businesses rather than hinder them.

Sayda Soto, Ms.

Self

Pasadena, TX

I oppose this bill.

Paula Wyche, Ms.

Texas Christian University

Fort Worth, TX

This bill is an offense against the free speech, parent's rights to raise their children as they see fit, and places ideological barriers to free commerce. It encourages the use of frivolous lawsuits to harass bookstores. Kick this disgrace to the curb.

Kaybee Brookins

self

Austin, TX

Hi, my name is Kaybee Brookins. I live in Austin. I am messaging to voice opposition to HB 1375 that will be heard during the Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee hearing on Wednesday. I've been watching the rise of book challenges and book bans in our Texas public schools and public libraries for the past several years, and have been assured that I don't need to worry, because I can still buy the books from the bookstore. HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries. Please don't interfere with my family's ability to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools, by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Please don't vote HB 1375 out of committee.

Samantha Clark

Authors Against Book Bans

Round Rock, TX

We are writing today on behalf of more than 5,000 book creators to ask legislators to reject Texas HB 1375. This bill will harm authors, small businesses, and ultimately the children the bill claims to protect.

Texas HB 1375 alters the human trafficking section of the penal code, implying that books are being used for grooming children. This is false and dangerous. It is already illegal to sell "harmful to minors" materials under Texas Penal Code §43.24. HB 1375 merely creates a pathway for frivolous lawsuits.

In similar situations and in other contexts, we have seen cottage industries emerge where unscrupulous attorneys find serial plaintiffs to seek damages and provide a payday in legal fees. [1] If Texas HB 1375 becomes law, people will file suits looking for bounties even though suits will not have merit. Such suits will devastate small businesses as a single settlement or the cost of bringing a single suit to court could put an independent bookstore out of business.

Such a law would force bookstores to close their doors to minors, bringing an end to story times and children's book sections, both of which are essential supports for the academic achievement and social emotional development of minors.[2] At the same time, the consequences of the law would threaten the livelihoods of law-abiding Texans who own or are employed by bookstores. But not only that, this bill would needlessly imperil authors. The overly broad language of the bill makes the stopping point for criminal charges dangerously unclear.

We ask you to protect the rights of your citizens and reject this reckless bill.

Thank you,

Authors Against Book Bans Board

Samira Ahmed

Dhonielle Clayton

Gayle Forman

Alan Gratz

Adib Khorram

Maris Kreizman

David Levithan

Sarah MacLean

Joanna Ho

Maggie Tokuda-Hall

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Ashra Londa  
self - librarian  
Denton, TX

Hello, I am AGAINST HB 1375. I believe that as parents, we should be the ones to monitor what we want our children to read. I do not think it is efficient or reasonable to expect a bookseller to monitor every child in the building - as parents, it's OUR job, not the bookseller's! Thank you.

Consuelo Wilder  
self / bookseller  
Manor, TX

This bill affects me professionally as a bookseller of 20 years and personally as a parent. I cannot imagine a world where we can't freely take our children to bookstore -- a place for fostering imagination, creativity, education, and critical thinking skills. If bookstores are under attack from civil suits, they will be forced to limit access or fully shut down kids sections and programs. These are essential pillars of community. I urge you to stop this bill.

Justin Swink  
Self  
Watauga, TX

This bill should be stopped from proceeding. It is in direct conflict with our First Amendment rights and amounts to censorship. Parents should be able to decide what their children can and cannot read, not the government, not anymore business business, and not any other groups or individual. This bill not only threatens free speech and risks book banning, it will threaten small business who sell books and place employees of those businesses in a dubious situation. As a parent, I believe it's my right to monitor my children's reading material. I do not give consent for anyone else to do this. This bill is in-American, anti-business, and works to shutdown free flow of ideas and thought. Do not let this bill pass. Do the right thing for Texans.

Dawn Longmire Smith  
Self/retired public school teacher  
Santa Anna, TX

We do NOT need HB 1375. It places too much responsibility on booksellers for people's reaction to literature. Too many people today freak out over certain topics (race, gender identity, etc.) and they will use this law to sue booksellers into not selling books that a small portion of the population find objectionable. If this same small group of people actually read the entire Christian Bible, they would ban IT for its graphic depictions of violence and sexual immorality. Please do not make booksellers limit the books they carry/sell because a few people want to eliminate any point of view but their own. This is not Nazi Germany. Stop making laws that will make the US be like Nazi Germany. There are many good books about how BAD the Nazis were/are. Read one of them & then vote NO to HB1375. We must guard & preserve our 1st Amendment right of Freedom of Speech and Thought. If people don't like a book, they don't have to buy it. But they don't have the right to infringe upon MY RIGHT to buy that book. NO to HB1375.

Tony Prenger  
Self  
Austin, TX

This bill is a violation of the freedom of speech, a constitutional, right. It must be opposed at all costs. There are books and published information that is always going to be subject to opposition. Regardless. This should not be a reason to ban books and other published information. It is of the detriment of our population, if this bill were to pass

kate bremer  
banned books society  
blanco, TX

punishing bookstores for carrying books that you don't like is authoritarianism. NO on this bill

Bonnie Bogert

Self

Conroe, TX

I'm opposed to this bill because booksellers should be able to sell books without fear of getting sued, and Texans should be able to purchase whatever books they want.

Rob Ryman

self

Arlington, TX

This's the plot to Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451. Those in support of legislature like HB 1375 must be deeply disturbed.

Carol Peters

self

Fort Worth, TX

I am writing to voice opposition to HB 1375 that will be heard during the Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee hearing on Wednesday. I am disturbed by the rising number of book challenges and bans in our Texas public schools and public libraries as I love to read. I have been assured that I don't need to worry, because I can still buy the books from the bookstore. HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted in schools and public libraries. Please don't make it even harder to shop for books that are becoming extinct in our libraries and schools by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Do not vote HB 1375 out of committee.

Jessica Gutierrez

self

Pearland, TX

I'm against this bill

Melanie Cofield

self, Librarian

Austin, TX

Representative Schatzline has tried to assure us in the past that we don't need to worry about school book bans because parents can still buy the books from the bookstore. Schatzline's HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries. Please don't interfere with booksellers' business and my family's ability to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools, by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. This law would essentially be infringing on people's right to access information, which is necessary in a democratic society to ensure the free flow of civic information and enable other civil liberties and rights. Please do not promote censorship, and oppose HB 1375.

KARIN DUNKER

SELF, YMCA SWIM INSTRUCTOR

BENBROOK, TX

I am writing to voice opposition to HB 1375 that will be heard during the Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee hearing on Wednesday. I've been watching the rise of book challenges and book bans in our Texas public schools and public libraries for the past several years and have been assured that I don't need to worry, because I can still buy the books from the bookstore. HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries. My family members are all avid readers. The adults in our family are responsible for helping the children pick age and content appropriate materials to read. It is not someone else's right or responsibility to decide what my children and grandchildren read. Please don't interfere with my family's ability to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools, by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Please don't vote HB 1375 out of committee."

Casey Gibson  
Self  
San Antonio, TX

A bill like this is ridiculous and unnecessary. Allowing private citizens to sue bookstores for selling books is a waste of tax payer money and our courts' time. There are real issues that need to be dealt with, such as the lack of funding in public schools, a problem that is real and harmful to Texas children.

Patricia Sumrow  
Self  
Frisco, TX

This bill is going too far and would open private booksellers to frivolous lawsuits. This legislature preaches a lot about parents having choices, yet this seems to limit their choice by scaring booksellers out of carrying books some deem "obscene." This bill is a colossal waste of the legislature's time. Please oppose it and focus on issues that are actually impacting Texans.

Natalie Youngberg  
SELF  
Kingwood, TX

I've been watching the rise of book challenges and book bans in our Texas public schools and public libraries for the past several years, and have been assured that I don't need to worry, because I can still buy the books from the bookstore. HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries. Please don't interfere with my family's ability to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools, by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Please don't vote HB 1375 out of committee.

Lauren Benson  
self  
Dripping Springs, TX

I oppose HB1375. HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries. Please don't interfere with my family's ability to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools, by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Please don't vote HB 1375 out of committee.

Marnie Fangio  
Self  
Abilene, TX

This bill should absolutely not be passed. The only thing this bill will do is open small business books stores open to law suits. A book store should have the rights to sell books without fear of being sued, it's that simple.

Melissa Markland, owner, SweetCrows Bookstore  
Self, owner SweetCrows Bookstore  
Coleman, TX

Let people buy what they like; let stores sell what the people wish to buy. If a parent doesn't want their particular child to read a particular piece of literature, they need to have a conversation about it, not fight to keep others from accessing it. It's 2025 for God's sake, not 1984.

Courtney Jackel

Self

Abilene, TX

It is beyond ridiculous that we're even having to sit here and tell adults what's they can and cannot buy with their own money because parents are being irresponsible and not monitoring what their children are reading. How does it make sense to punish small businesses by letting private citizens file lawsuits just because they don't like a book that a bookstore is selling?? I've never been forced to buy pornographic or obscene books by my local book shop. This is a slippery slope into full blown government overreach and fascism. You're taking away the people's right to read what they want to read instead of letting us use our own judgment. A booking burning without the lighter fluid.

Hannah Whiteker

Self - Writer

Conroe, TX

This bill is a clear overstep by the Texas government. All individuals in the state have the right to free commerce which means running their business how they wish. Booksellers should not be limited on what books they are allowed to sell, or be in fear of what books they are allowed to sell because it might offend someone else. This takes personal responsibility off of the book buyer and puts it on the seller.

Paula Cary

Self

San Antonio, TX

I oppose HB 1375, all persons are afforded the right to their pursuit of knowledge and may seek for themselves literature, books, literary materials of their choosing.

As a lifelong book store supporter, there is no reason to deny entry to your standard bookstore or library.

This is an unnecessary bill and only seeks to deprive citizens of their rights to pursuit of happiness.

Jeff Mueller

Self

San Antonio, TX

This bill will cause undue harm to independent, local businesses by subjecting them to the whims of zealots and the ignorant. There is already a law on the books protecting minors from inappropriate material, there is no reason other than pure vindictive feelings and hatred towards views that run counter to the white Christian nationalist views. Members of Congress have railed against the implementation of "sharia law" in this state and country for decades, yet the conservative majority is doing exactly that under the guise of being a "good Christian nation". Please vote No on this bill to maintain the freedom that you espouse so much.

jessica Stuart

self

San Antonio, TX

I am commenting against this bill. It has a chilling effect on freedom of speech, and will be used to punish book sellers whom people merely disagree with.

Laura Kilaen

self, stay-at-home-mom

Austin, TX

Hi, my name is Laura Kilaen. I am a native Texan, married to a native Texan, and my husband and I have raised our son here in Texas. I am vehemently AGAINST HB 1375 which is a government "solution" in search of a problem. It is my responsibility to guide my son in the books he chooses, and I cannot imagine needing to sue someone because he randomly picked up a book I don't feel is appropriate, while we're in a bookstore. In fact, he has done so, and as his parent I said "that's not for kids" or "maybe when you're older" and we moved on with our day. I don't want the bookstores in my community to feel scared to carry books because they might get targeted by a frivolous lawsuit. Please don't vote the bad bill HB 1375 out of committee.

Kaitlen Eckmann

Self

Galveston, TX

If booksellers - small and large - fear that they'll face lawsuits for carrying material frequently targeted by book banners, they will take their business out of Texas. Limiting access to books, especially in the midst of increased attempts to remove books from library shelves, does not benefit Texans. I oppose this bill.

Sandra Alvarez

self

Austin, TX

I oppose HB 1375 that will be heard by during the Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee hearing on Wednesday. HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries. Please don't interfere with citizens of this state ability to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools, by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Please don't vote HB 1375 out of committee."

Ashton Taylor

Self

Abilene, TX

I strongly oppose Texas House Bill 1375, which introduces vague and overly broad definitions of "obscene" and "harmful" materials, posing a serious threat to free expression and access to educational and artistic content. The bill's ambiguous language could lead to inconsistent enforcement and a chilling effect, prompting businesses and creators to self-censor to avoid potential lawsuits. This disproportionately burdens small publishers, educators, and online platforms, undermining innovation and limiting public discourse. The proposed legislation is redundant given existing Texas laws on obscenity, and it opens the door to discriminatory enforcement based on subjective interpretations. I am a future educator, planning to teach in this state that I love, so I urge lawmakers to reject HB 1375 and protect both minors and the constitutional rights of all Texans.

Anna Morales

Self, Texas state government contractor

Round Rock, TX

Hi, my name is Anna Morales. I live in Round Rock. I am calling to voice opposition to HB 1375 that will be heard by John H. Bucy III during the Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee hearing on Wednesday. I've been watching the rise of book challenges and book bans in our Texas public schools and public libraries for the past several years, and have been assured that I don't need to worry, because I can still buy the books from the bookstore. HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries. Please don't interfere with my family's ability to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools, by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Please don't vote HB 1375 out of committee."

Karen Santhanam

Self

Cedar Park, TX

I oppose HB 1375. I've been watching the rise of book challenges and book bans in our Texas public schools and public libraries for the past several years, and have been assured that I don't need to worry, because I can still buy the books from the bookstore. HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries. Please don't interfere with my family's ability to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools, by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Please stop this bill.

Jennifer Machajewski

self, parent and writer

Georgetown, TX

I oppose HB 1375 because it infringes on the personal liberty of every Texan to access, read, and purchase the reading material they choose to suitable for themselves and their family.

The bill is an overreach of the government. It uses the term "obscene" as code for any book that a single individual might oppose, which the book bans in schools have shown really means oppressing any mention of sex, sexuality, reproductive, even basic puberty information. I am a firm believer in the freedom to read for all people and for everyone to have the opportunity to see themselves reflected in a book. HB 1375 adds to the long list of book banning efforts by the Texas legislature that violates the 1st Amendment of the United States.

HB 1375 will also impact the local economies of small communities. If bookstores (corporate, indie, religious, used) must sanitize their shelves of anything a child might see, then people will not have books to buy and stores will close or leave Texas. It's not just bookstores; Wal-Mart, Costco, Target, HEB all carry books in some quantity, and they may find that removing the books is safer than risking frivolous litigation.

I suppose that might be the ultimate purpose of all the book bans: to remove all physical books from public community access. But access to books is central to the survival of the local economy of many towns and cities. With no books to buy (new or used, indie or chain store), people will stop going to downtown or stop going to the shopping center with the bookstore; they'll stop eating at restaurants nearby; they'll stop filling their tank at the gas station in that neighborhood; they'll stop eating lunch out right before they take their child to storytime. Some pay perceive that religious bookstores are immune to HB 1375, but religious books (Bible, Torah, etc), memoirs, devotionals, stories of saints, and biographies of famous pastors are full of material "offense" to many individuals. Under HB 1375 those who sold religious books in any location or setting, could face litigation.

Please reject HB 1375 and protect every Texan's right to access books without inference from the government.

Martha Martinez

self

garland, TX

Hi, my name is Martha. I live in Garland. I am calling to voice opposition to HB 1375 that will be heard during the Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee hearing on Wednesday. I've been watching the rise of book challenges and book bans in our Texas public schools and public libraries for the past several years, and have been assured that I don't need to worry, because I can still buy the books from the bookstore. HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries. Please don't interfere with my family's ability to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools, by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Please don't vote HB 1375 out of committee."

carmen Castaneda

self

Garland, TX

Hi, my name is Carmen. I live in Garland. I am calling to voice opposition to HB 1375 that will be heard during the Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee hearing on Wednesday. I've been watching the rise of book challenges and book bans in our Texas public schools and public libraries for the past several years, and have been assured that I don't need to worry, because I can still buy the books from the bookstore. HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries. Please don't interfere with my family's ability to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools, by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Please don't vote HB 1375 out of committee."

Victoria Castaneda

Mesquite Public Library - North Branch

garland, TX

Hi, my name is Victoria. I live in Garland. I am calling to voice opposition to HB 1375 that will be heard by the house during the Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee hearing on Wednesday. I've been watching the rise of book challenges and book bans in our Texas public schools and public libraries for the past several years, and have been assured that I don't need to worry, because I can still buy the books from the bookstore. HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries. Please don't interfere with my family's ability to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools, by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Please don't vote HB 1375 out of committee."

Alice Dorsey

self

Pearland, TX

Texans love freedom. We do not approve of censorship. Please know this is a wildly unpopular nanny-state bill.

Chris Barton

Self

Austin, TX

H-E-B sells beer and wine. Beer and wine are not for children to drink. Yet we don't forbid children from entering grocery stores.

Academy sells fishing licenses. Children don't need fishing licenses. Yet we don't forbid children from entering sporting goods stores.

Autozone sells automotive supplies. Children under 16 don't have drivers licenses. Yet we don't forbid children from entering auto parts stores.

Don't infringe on Texas parents' rights to let their own children have access to bookstores any more than you would infringe on their rights to let their children visit H-E-B, Academy, or Autozone.

And don't enable Texans who think it's their place to control what other people's children read. Keep their noses out of our families' business and their hands off of our First Amendment rights.

Vote against this bill.

Deana Johnston

Texas Eagle Forum, Communications Director

Dallas, TX

Please pass HB 1375 and give families the ability to take civil action for damages arising from the distribution, transmission, or display of harmful material to a minor by a commercial entity.

Matthew Morrison

Self, Librarian.

Fort Worth, TX

As a librarian, taxpayer and Texas, I am firmly against HB 1375. This bill is the latest assault on the freedom to read by an organized cabal that seek to control the flow of any information that runs counter to their agenda. It started with them trying to ban books in the public schools, on the grounds that these books were still available in the public libraries for those who wanted them. Through HB 3225, they are now banning books from public libraries. HB 1375 is the final stroke, attacking the right of independent book stores to sell what they wish. All of this is being carried out in the name of decency and protecting children. However, this ignores that the public schools and public libraries already have safeguards and tools in place that allow parents to control what materials their children can access. They can also request reconsideration of materials they find objectionable and alternative reading assignments from their children's teachers. The minds behind HB 1375 pretend such safeguards do not exist. They have gotten a good deal of press talking about pornography in the public libraries, waving around graphic novels aimed at older teens while talking about finding such materials in the schools. They do not mention that it was high schools rather than elementary schools, encouraging those not paying close attention to believe such materials are being offered up to young children. Ignoring these disingenuous efforts, HB 1375 further ignores the rights of parents who wish for their children to be able to access whatever reading material they want. It should be the rights of the parents to set limits (or a lack of them) for their children as they see fit. It should not be the role of the librarians or the retailers to play the part of the book police or bouncers in a club, checking for ID lest someone under 18 read *The Bluest Eye* or *The Catcher in the Rye*. To that end, I urge this committee to vote against HB 1375.

Lisa Stone

self, educator

Houston, TX

I live in Houston; I'm writing to join all those who are in opposition to HB 1375 that will be heard during the Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee hearing on Wednesday. I've been watching the rise of book challenges and book bans in our Texas public schools and public libraries for the past several years, and have been assured I don't need to worry, because I can still buy the books from the bookstore. However, now HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries. Please don't interfere with my family's ability to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools, by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Please don't vote HB 1375 out of committee.

Ronnie Gatlin

Self

Italy, TX

I support this Bill.

Beverly Gatlin

Self

Italy, TX

I support this Bill.

Jeremy Wilkins

self

Carrollton, TX

This bill, being on its face a clear violation of the 1st Amendment of the US constitution and an intolerable infringement on the rights of every Texan, should be dismissed from the House with prejudice. Due to its extreme weakness as legislation it will be immediately challenged and blocked by state and federal courts before ultimately being repealed meaning that it's ultimate legacy will be to waste taxpayer money and legislative effort that could have been better used to booster our state against actual issues, instead of imagined boogymen. That this bill should have ever reached the floor of our state government is an embarrassment and speaks of legislators who value virtue signalling more than they do actually performing their duties as civil servants.

Alexandra Wilkins

self, archivist

Carrollton, TX

For years, I have been told that book bans in public and school libraries are no issue because I will be able to buy the removed books from local booksellers if I so choose. HB 1375 removes my option as a parent to do so by forcing bookstores to alter the books they carry to conform with the views of the state. This is a direct violation of my First Amendment rights to access published works via freedom of the press. Additionally, it violates the rights of parents to decide what their children may and may not read by severely limiting the parent's access to books. How can a parent decide if they want their child to read a book or not if they themselves do not have access to the book? Please do not vote HB 1375 out of committee.

Melanie Gibson, Ms.

self, school librarian

Dallas, TX

My name is Melanie Gibson. I am a private school librarian. I am opposed to HB 1375 that will be heard during the Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee hearing on Wednesday. I've been watching with growing concern the rise of book challenges and book bans in our Texas public schools and public libraries for the past several years. While lawmakers have said we don't need to worry because we can still buy the books from the bookstore, HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries. This is a violation not only of individuals' right to access information, but also of the rights of booksellers to conduct business without interference from the government. There are already laws in place protecting minors from obscenity. This bill seeks to bypass the First Amendment protections protected by the Constitution. It also seeks to bypass the tests put in place by Supreme Court decisions handed down decades ago, which protect the First Amendment rights of minors. Please don't interfere with my family's ability to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools, by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Please don't vote HB 1375 out of committee. Thank you for your work to protect everyone's right to access information.

Mary Woodard

Self

Desoto, TX

I am opposed to this bill. It targets booksellers and makes it easier for someone who finds content in a book objectionable to bring a frivolous lawsuit against any business that provides that material. I urge you to vote AGAINST this bill.

Vivian Rutledge

Self - retired

Richardson, TX

My name is Vivian Rutledge. I live in Richardson. I am writing to voice opposition to HB 1375 that will be heard by Nate Schatzline during the Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee hearing on Wednesday. I've been watching the rise of book challenges and book bans in our Texas public schools and public libraries for the past several years, and have been assured that I don't need to worry, because I can still buy the books from the bookstore. HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries. Please don't interfere with my family's ability to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools, by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Please don't vote HB 1375 out of committee."

Marissa Stewart  
self and teacher  
Hutto, TX

I am commenting to voice opposition to HB 1375. I've been watching the rise of book challenges and book bans in our Texas public schools and public libraries for the past several years, and have been assured that I don't need to worry, because I can still buy the books from the bookstore. HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries. Please don't interfere with my family's ability to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools, by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. People always have the choice to not buy a book, so it is unnecessary to make the books unavailable in the store. Please don't vote HB 1375 out of committee.

Kelly Schlesinger  
self  
Spring, TX

HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries. Please don't interfere with my family's ability to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools, by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Please don't vote HB 1375 out of committee."

Melanie Cremins  
self - author  
Houston, TX

As a parent, an author, and a frequent bookstore customer, I feel strongly that it is up to the individual/family to choose which books to buy and consume, and not up to the legislature to interfere in the decisions of consumers or of professionals such as book buyers, librarians, and educators. These professionals should be free to stock / make available whichever books suit their market, and individuals free to access those books. It's not a legislative issue, and it's insulting to my integrity and intelligence to suggest I need the state to pre-censor materials from me.

Katrina Connor  
self  
plano, TX

Hi, my name is Katrina. I live in Plano. I am calling to voice opposition to HB 1375 that will be heard during the Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee hearing on Wednesday. I've been watching the rise of book challenges and book bans in our Texas public schools and public libraries for the past several years, and have been assured that I don't need to worry, because I can still buy the books from the bookstore. HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries. Please don't interfere with my family's ability to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools, by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Please don't vote HB 1375 out of committee. Books are so important for learning, growing and challenging opinions. We need to be able to access literature of all kinds.

Katherine Adelman  
Constituent  
San Antonio, TX

This bill is merely a continued attack on American's right to free speech. It is also offensive in that the impact would be to harm small businesses across the state. There is already a law banning the sale of harmful content to minors, and we do not need to lower the standards for a lawsuit. The primary result of this law would force bookstores to defend themselves against those who are seeking to restrict content they personally find to be offensive. This bill is anti democratic in nature and an affront to personal liberty and free speech.

Kendra Leonard, Dr.

Authors Against Book Bans/self--writer

Humble, TX

My name is Kendra Preston Leonard. I'm a constituent in 77396 and I am writing to ask Representative Dutton to oppose HB 3225 when it comes to the House floor for a vote. Since there is no option for parents to opt in or out of restrictions the bill would impose, HB 3225 would take away parents' rights to decide what books their own children can and cannot access in the public library. The way the law is written, all minors- including teenage patrons- would be limited to the children's section of the library. And if libraries cannot guarantee physical separation of books that contain "sexually explicit" as broadly defined by the bill, public libraries may have to ban patrons under 18 from accessing the library, without their parents, all together. Please ensure our community's libraries remain open to patrons of all ages and oppose HB 3225."

Carolyn Foote

Self

Austin, TX

Registering as a no on HB1375. HB1375 would create a situation where commercial bookstores would be subjected to prosecution for having bookstores that have a variety of ages represented (which is every bookstore). Bookstores, like public libraries, have many sections for customers. The sections have age relevant materials in them, pertinent to particular age groups. Materials for teens seem especially targeted in a bill like this - since there are topics for teens that cover more mature content. The definitions in this bill could call into question that content. Since no court would find a typical bookstore liable for any sort of obscenity charges over traditional bookstore materials, this bill is completely unnecessary. However, it could result in harassment types of charges filed against bookstore proprietors and possibly charges filed against publishers on young adult literature. It would also put into question because of the vagueness of the definitions what sort of content would make a bookstore liable. This bill would be declared unconstitutional, since these are private commercial entities, for one thing. (There's precedent in a case in Virginia where someone tried to bring charges against a bookstore, and the case was thrown out.) The state should not waste it's time putting forward this bill. Censors said when they removed materials from school libraries that they could always buy it. A bill like this shows that the goal is to indiscriminately eliminate these sorts of books altogether. Teens deserve access to age relevant information about topics like sex education, as well as access to classics that these definitions throw into uncertain territory. Are Texas teens just not able to read books on sex education, LGBTQ topics, or classic novels like Farewell to Arms, Lonesome Dove, the Color Purple, etc? These books would be under question even in bookstores, a voluntary commercial establishment, under this bill. Please vote no.

Namrata Vasquez

Self

Houston, TX

Please allow private entities and bookstores to sell literature freely, and without penalty.

Jackalyn Rainosek

DTP Leadership Group

Houston, TX

Say no

Catherine Davis

Self

Dickinson, TX

By implementing this bill on bookstores, we are hindering peoples first amendment for free speech. The decision of if books are "obscene" for children should be left with the parent of that child. Bookstores should not be held accountable for selling content that one person may find "obscene"

If this bill were to pass then it will be seen as an attack on books and free speech. Movies can be obscene and yet no one is going after movie theaters or places that sell movies for having "obscene" content.

Andrea Hilkovitz, Dr.

Self

Round Rock, TX

Placing this responsibility on bookstores is not pro-business.

Brittany watson

Self

Waxahachie, TX

Books are for everyone if people don't want their kids to see something g then they need to stay vigilant not everyone else! To say that a book store has to "card people at the door" is ridiculous! Keep book stores accessible don't deny others because the few can't control their dam kids!

Jack Brewer

self

Killeen, TX

It is already illegal to sell harmful material to minors. This bill is a blatant attack on freedom of speech and expression and an attempt to limit the availability of ideas and concepts to the American people. Small businesses such as the one I work at cannot afford legal battles over junk lawsuits and the legislature knows this. It is not only a gross act of censorship but an attack on small, independent businesses forcing them to either adhere to the strictest form of censor or risk going out of business, simply because they are exercising their rights granted to them by the constitution and the spirit of free market. Few things are more disgusting than political agendas using children as shields as is the case with HB 1375 and the Texas legislature should be ashamed for even entertaining such a proposal.

Mattie B

Self - Bookseller

Austin, TX

It is already illegal to sell minors legally harmful material. But in creating a civil cause of action, this bill virtually guarantees frivolous lawsuits filed against bookstores to chill speech. If someone merely thinks their child has been "harmed" by accessing a book they deem harmful, they can file a suit against a bookseller. Whether or not such a suit is ultimately successful, the time and expense of opposing it is beyond what any small business owner can take on. In practice, many of these suits result in settlement regardless of the merits of the claim. It thus becomes a bounty bill that someone can use to seek "damages" when no damage has been done in hopes of intimidating someone into a settlement. It can also be a way for someone to harass a bookstore they don't like.

Furthermore, any attempts by businesses to comply with this bill would be immensely costly, any way you slice it. If we as a bookstore were to review every single piece of literature that has ever come through our doors, it would take our staff of 60+ people \*years\* to comb through everything for content issues, and would need to be paid for their work, and that isn't taking into account the new books coming out every \*week.\* Add to that a frivolous lawsuit over a parent objecting to "Santa's Husband" or the like, and you may as well say "this local establishment that's a landmark in its city is being shuttered by order of the state government." Not a good look for the party of small government, now, is it?

Veronica Valbuena

Self

Cypress, TX

Please stop making reading less and less accesible ro our children. We already have a literacy problem and have libraries shutting down! This Bill is harmful

Amanda Mérida

self

Cypress, TX

Book stores should not have to live in fear for what should be a parents responsibility. This is a threat to freedom of speech and a threat to literature in this country. What is the overall gain of making reading less and less accessible?

Ashley Roland

Self

Granbury, TX

I strongly oppose Texas House Bill 1375, which seeks to impose civil liability on individuals and entities for the distribution, transmission, or display of material deemed "obscene" to minors. While the intent to protect children from harmful content is commendable, this bill introduces several problematic provisions that could infringe upon free speech, burden businesses, and lead to unintended legal consequences.

Key Concerns:

**Broad and Vague Definitions:** The bill defines "harmful material" and "obscenity" by referencing existing statutes without providing clear guidelines. This lack of specificity could lead to subjective interpretations, potentially criminalizing legitimate educational, artistic, or journalistic content.?

**Chilling Effect on Free Expression:** By holding individuals and entities liable for the distribution of material deemed obscene, the bill could deter the dissemination of diverse viewpoints and creative works, infringing upon First Amendment rights.?

**Overburdening Businesses:** The provisions could impose significant legal and financial burdens on businesses, especially small enterprises, as they navigate the complexities of determining what constitutes "harmful material" and defending against potential lawsuits.?

**Potential for Overreach:** The bill's expansive language and lack of clear exemptions for educational and journalistic content could lead to overreach, where materials intended for educational purposes might be unjustly targeted.?

Conclusion:

Texas House Bill 1375 employs overly broad and vague language that threatens free speech, imposes undue burdens on businesses, and risks unintended legal consequences. I urge lawmakers to reconsider this bill and seek more precise and balanced approaches to safeguarding children without compromising constitutional rights.

Suzanne Armstrong

Twig Book Shop/Bookseller

San Antonio, TX

Hello,

This law as written is too broad and the vocabulary is ill defined. Because of this, I believe it is impossible to enforce and will lead to illegitimate lawsuits for purposes other than the protection of the young people of the United States. Various courts will arrive at differing opinions depending on each court's definition of the words. It is impossible for Commercial Entities to determine what the law actually means in order to abide by this statute. Businesses do not need this added burden. There is a better way. Please seek the better way.

Thank you,

Suzanne Armstrong

Joseph Mayes

EvenFellows Publishing LLC (dba Patchouli Joe's Books & Indulgences)

Krugerville, TX

Call this what you will, but it is not hyperbole to suggest that HB 1375 represents an existential threat to independent bookstores throughout the state.

This bill paves the way for bookstores to be the target of spurious lawsuits, based on the wording of both H.B. 1375 and Texas Penal Code. While I am not an attorney, most bookstores I know will be unable to afford to continue to fight these suits in court. Ceasing operations could become the most effective/only means of mitigating this risk.

The definition of "harmful material" in this bill is vague and broad, open to wide interpretation. Someone, for example, could object to a popular children's series called "Captain Underpants," filing a suit which would stand little chance of reaching the court, but for which the bookstore would have to expend large amounts of money defending.

To put this in practical terms, if anyone—literally anyone—decides that any book carried by our bookstore in our children's section is "harmful material," they can file a civil lawsuit against us. They may not win in court but it wouldn't take having to defend too many lawsuits before we wouldn't be able to continue to fight.

We absolutely support parents protecting their children from material they deem inappropriate. But this bill puts an unnecessary target on the front doors of booksellers.

We ask that you vote according to your own conscience.

I know we will.

Nancy Gebhardt

Twig Book Shop

San Antonio, TX

I have worked in an independent book store since I retired from public education as a reading specialist. Books bring joy to all ages. There is no way to police youth coming into the shop. If parents don't want their children buying books or even checking them out from a library, that is their choice. Having booksellers police or take the role of a parent in a bookstore is more than absurd. Pushing the responsibility to booksellers is an impossible situation. Parents who are scared of books can read them first. Stop trying to pass the responsibility to booksellers or librarians.

Ruth Guymon

Self

Hurst, TX

This will not protect minors. It will be a means for persecuting book stores and deny free speech. Vote no.

Nichole Parr  
Self/Technical Specialist  
Lake Worth, TX

I strongly oppose Texas House Bill 1375, which seeks to impose civil liability on individuals and entities for the distribution, transmission, or display of material deemed "obscene" to minors. While the intent to protect children from harmful content is commendable, this bill introduces several problematic provisions that could infringe upon free speech, burden businesses, and lead to unintended legal consequences.

Key Concerns:

**Broad and Vague Definitions:** The bill defines "harmful material" and "obscenity" by referencing existing statutes without providing clear guidelines. This lack of specificity could lead to subjective interpretations, potentially criminalizing legitimate educational, artistic, or journalistic content.

Texas Legislature Online

**Chilling Effect on Free Expression:** By holding individuals and entities liable for the distribution of material deemed obscene, the bill could deter the dissemination of diverse viewpoints and creative works, infringing upon First Amendment rights.

**Overburdening Businesses:** The provisions could impose significant legal and financial burdens on businesses, especially small enterprises, as they navigate the complexities of determining what constitutes "harmful material" and defending against potential lawsuits.

Texas Legislature Online

**Potential for Overreach:** The bill's expansive language and lack of clear exemptions for educational and journalistic content could lead to overreach, where materials intended for educational purposes might be unjustly targeted.

Conclusion:

While the protection of minors from harmful content is a priority, Texas House Bill 1375 employs overly broad and vague language that threatens free speech, imposes undue burdens on businesses, and risks unintended legal consequences. We urge lawmakers to reconsider this bill and seek more precise and balanced approaches to safeguarding children without compromising constitutional rights.

Anne Newman  
self  
Boerne, TX

I support HB 1375.

Michele Hernandez  
The Twig Bookshop  
San Antonio, TX

As a bookseller in San Antonio, I am writing for you to vote against HB1375. This bill places unnecessary burden on us as the bookseller. We sell books at The Twig that are age appropriate in different sections of the store. We are located in a high tourist area, and verifying the age of a child would be next to impossible for us. We are a family friendly store, and we work with many local schools. We as a staff are able to recommend appropriate books when asked, and we are asked often, usually by a parent with their child present. Also, any lawsuit would destroy us as a business - us and every other independent bookstore in this state. Our in house story teller is amazing, and I invite you to come out on a Friday morning, or on a weekend and see how many people come to our store. This law would be impossible for us to enforce.

Karen Saadeh

self

Austin, TX

PLEASE VOTE NO On HB 1375!!

This bill is unnecessary as it is already illegal to sell harmful material to minors and it creates an environment where anyone can file suit against a store they don't like for some reason. This will be extremely harmful to small independent book stores and will likely put many out of business.

It is already illegal to sell minors legally harmful material. But in creating a civil cause of action, this bill virtually guarantees frivolous lawsuits filed against bookstores to chill speech. If someone merely thinks their child has been "harmed" by accessing a book they deem harmful, they can file a suit against a bookseller.

Whether or not such a suit is ultimately successful, the time and expense of opposing it is beyond what any small business owner can take on. In practice, many of these suits result in settlement regardless of the merits of the claim. It thus becomes a bounty bill that someone can use to seek "damages" when no damage has been done in hopes of intimidating someone into a settlement. It can also be a way for someone to harass a bookstore they don't like.

I love my local independent book stores and do not see "harmful material" when I shop. We need to protect small businesses, not drive them out of business.

PLEASE VOTE NO On HB 1375!! Thank you.

Christine Vierra, Ms.

Self

Montgomery, TX

Please vote no on this bill. This demonizes booksellers and puts the owners on a business to control what a minor sees: that should be the responsibility of the parents. Additionally, this will have a negative effect on children having access to bookstores, because businesses will be forced to keep children out of their businesses in order to protect themselves from litigious people.

Michael McCarthy

BookPeople

Austin, TX

This is a horrendous bill. Passing it will further Texas' long descent into turning into a Banana Republic. The sponsors of this bill should be ashamed of themselves.

Ivy Foster  
Recycled Books, Records, CDs  
Denton, TX

We're a family-owned and -run independent bookstore, in business since 1983 (42 years!). We're well known for having books to suit every interest, and parents bring their kids here not only from here in town but from towns and cities all around. Every summer, our Kids' Summer Reading Program gets literally thousands of dollars worth of books into the hands of local kids who love reading.

HB 1375 would put an end to that. After all, we have books for every interest. Therefore, *\*anybody\** could find *\*something\** to be offended by if they looked hard enough. If they happened to have their kid with them--well, I guess we'd better keep our lawyer on speed-dial, because this bill would make that legal grounds for a lawsuit. The other option would be simply banning children from the store...but that also seems like a great way to lose the countless families who bring their kids here to browse on the weekends and in the afternoon.

HB 1375 puts us and independent bookstores like us directly in the sights of opportunists hoping to get a quick settlement, knowing that even if their claim would be thrown out, we're in no position to waste time and money dealing with frivolous lawsuits.

This bill is dangerous: it encourages bad behavior and actively *\*discourages\** keeping a varied and interesting stock. It's also treading dangerously close to an anti-capitalist command economy for books.

Texas has long been known for its successful bookstores, like Austin's Book People, Larry McMurtry's Booked Up, and countless others big and small. We're an important part of Texas's culture and economy. Please vote NO on HB 1375.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jeanne Miers  
self  
San Antonio, TX

This bill would make book stores start carding people...not realistic. Please use some common sense and say no to this bill.

Stephanie Robertson  
Paper Bark Birch  
Cedar Park, TX

This bill offers no long-term benefit to our community. It oversteps the role of government by interfering in matters that rightly belong to parents—namely, determining what content is appropriate for their children's reading and maturity levels. Shifting this responsibility to small businesses by exposing them to potential liability places an unreasonable and unfair burden on them, particularly when the standards in question are highly subjective. This kind of legislation not only threatens the viability of small, community-based enterprises like independent bookstores, but also sets a dangerous precedent by centralizing control over deeply personal and local decisions. It undermines both individual rights and economic stability.

Anthony Gaetjen

Self - Bookseller

Austin, TX

I work to put on children's programming across Austin, bringing together members of our community. I host several author events at our bookstore every month, and I coordinate programming like our bookmark contest. The five winners of our bookmark contest, all kids aged 5-11, had 3000 copies each of their artwork printed and distributed for free to our customers. Every month, we host a petting zoo in our bookstore, which sees a turnout of 200-350 people, and children are always so excited to participate. Every month, I send out 200-400 postcards giving kids \$5 off at our store during their birthday month. I'm currently working on reviving a teen press corps at our store that would provide teens exclusive access to authors for interviews and allow them to read books before they come out. Valuable, formative experiences like this would be taken away from our community in the event that a bill like this passes, and I would no longer be able to do the same work to benefit our youth. Our independent business would suffer; my career would suffer; the development of children into vocations related to writing, arts, literature, and the press would suffer. And this is only one instance in one city--many such cases could be found across the state of Texas. I implore you to vote against this bill.

Laura Benac

BookPeople

Austin, TX

I work at BookPeople, an Austin institution that has been around for 50+ years and is nationally recognized as one of the best bookstores in the country. HB 1375 will put us out of business, point blank. Dozens of employees, some who have been in the business for decades, will cease to be without jobs if we cannot keep our sales up. We HEAVILY rely on our curated displays to hand sell books, and HB 1375 limits what we can shelve to near zero. Not only that, but prohibiting minors from entering our business should we not comply with these outrageous guidelines, the House would be stripping them of the countless experiences and memories created in and around our bookstore. From storytimes thrice weekly, to our monthly children's petting zoo, book clubs, and a safe space for teens to wander and hang around, BookPeople has provided those opportunities for decades in Austin. Not a day has gone by since I started working here that a shopper hasn't mentioned to me how they grew up coming here. By passing HB 1375, you are erasing that opportunity from today's children, tomorrow's leaders, for what?

Jody Zemel, Ms.

self retired

Austin, TX

It is already illegal to sell minors legally harmful material. But in creating a civil cause of action, this bill virtually guarantees frivolous lawsuits filed against bookstores to chill speech. If someone merely thinks their child has been "harmed" by accessing a book they deem harmful, they can file a suit against a bookseller.

Whether or not such a suit is ultimately successful, the time and expense of opposing it is beyond what any small business owner can take on. In practice, many of these suits result in settlement regardless of the merits of the claim. It thus becomes a bounty bill that someone can use to seek "damages" when no damage has been done in hopes of intimidating someone into a settlement. It can also be a way for someone to harass a bookstore they don't like.

Gregory Day, Mr.

BookPeople

Austin, TX

As someone that works for an independent bookstore, this bill will harm our business and potentially even cause it to close. This bill is aimed at helping children but it only harms bookstore owners and operators. This bill also infringes upon the rights parents have to buy what they deem appropriate for their children. This is again, another instance of the state telling businesses and people what they can and cannot do with legislation like this. If the state is concerned with what children are exposed to, then that should be up to the parents to police with their children, not for people to bring frivolous lawsuits against stores because they do not like what the stores choose to stock.

Martha Shoultz  
Partners for Ethical Care  
DALLAS, TX

Please support this bill that holds people accountable who expose children to obscene material

Susan Cherry  
Self  
Lubbock, TX

I support HB 1375.

Sara Biggs  
Self - Manufacturing Purchasing Manager  
Amarillo, TX

Having read through HB 1375 multiple times, I am concerned that this bill is going to lead to frivolous law suits against hardworking small business owners. The wording on the bill is very vague and could be taken as an excuse to criminalize booksellers for having any number of things on the shelves. If any one person wanders in and decides a book isn't up to their moral code, they will feel like they have a right to sue the business owner instead of simply walking out of the door. This bill seems to be designed to drive small independent bookstores out of business, when we should be promoting more variety of choice when it comes to shopping establishments.

All of this being said, please stop this bill in this committee and lets move forward with bills that will benefit the wide diversity of Texans, instead of ones that let people punish others for no reason.

Thomas Mutranowski  
Self  
Plano, TX

I support this legislation. Any commercial entity, business or organization that knowingly, willingly, or even unknowingly or unwillingly takes part in the distribution, transmission, or display of harmful material to a minor should be held accountable. It is the parent's right to protect their children and a penalty needs to be paid by those that subvert a parent's authority. The freedom to operate as a business does not give that business, commercial entity or organization the right to make money by any means possible. There is a civic responsibility to protect children. If that responsibility is not taken seriously, then there needs to be a civil recourse and restitution needs to be exacted. Thank you.

Bette Chapman, Mrs.  
Self  
Lake Worth, TX

Please support this bill. Thank you.

Natalie Zambreski  
Self - Small Business Owner  
Lane, TX

To The House Committee on Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence

As a mother of two, I care deeply about protecting children—and it is for that reason that I believe HB 1375 is well-intended but deeply misguided slippery slope.

What’s being framed as a child protection bill is actually a vague, overreaching piece of legislation that threatens free speech, personal choice, and small business in Texas.

The terms “obscenity” and “harmful material” are so loosely defined that almost anything—from books to educational content to inclusive curriculum—could be targeted. That’s not protecting families. That’s punishing ideas some people disagree with.

Worse, this bill creates liability not just for content creators, but for business owners and shareholders. That’s anti-business and completely OUT of line with any conservative, limited-government approach.

It should be up to parents, not the courts, and not activist lawsuits, to decide what’s right for their own families. Texans should be able to engage with a wide range of perspectives without the threat of legal action. This is foundational to who we are.

If we really want to protect children, let’s focus on strengthening education and supporting families—not passing laws that could be used to intimidate, silence, or punish.

Vote no on HB 1375. It’s a threat to parental rights, free expression, and the very values Texas claims to stand for.

Sincerely,  
Natalie Zambreski  
130 Trailview Lane  
Weatherford TX 76088

Mallory Melton  
Self/Bookseller  
Austin, TX

I have been working at BookPeople, an Austin small business that has been open for over 50 years, for the last four years. If this bill is passed, it would be very expensive for BookPeople to comply with. Much of the business that we do happens during weekday story times, where we read picture books to children, as well as welcome local organizations in to teach them music and have a monthly small animal petting zoo. If we stopped being able to allow kids through our doors, we would lose a significant income. For a business that is already hard to keep afloat, that employees 75 people in Austin, this could be detrimental. Austin has a rich history of independent bookstores, and frivolous lawsuits like the ones that could happen across Texas if this bill is passed could put them out of business. It is highly valuable for kids and parents to be welcomed into our store to meet authors. This bill would inhibit our ability to do that, and could put BookPeople and several other small businesses in Texas out of business, causing 100s of Texans to lose their jobs.

Amy McInnes  
BookPeople  
Austin, TX

BookPeople has been a family friendly establishment for over 50 years. We provide a wide variety of books to people of all ages. as well as putting on events to foster a love of reading in our community. Our events include Storytimes for children, author events, and release parties, we offer a lot to our local community by giving them a space to bring their friends, family, and loved ones. It is important that BookPeople is able to continue with our mission, to have a community bound by books. For all AGES.

Parker Welch

Self, civil engineer

Austin, TX

I oppose HB 1375. This bill is an unconstitutional infringement on Texans' first amendment right to freedom of speech. This bill will lead to ridiculous situations like book stores having to card people at the door to make sure they cannot be held liable. No American can stand for this level of government interference in the personal affairs of its citizens.

Renee Sima

self

Austin, TX

I am a bookseller at Bookpeople, the largest independent bookstore in Texas. Bookpeople has been a core and valued part of the Austin community for over 50 years, and employs me and dozens of my coworkers. Should HB 1375 be enacted into law, our business would realistically have to prevent minors from entering the store or browsing our shelves. Though we've had a robust children's programming and an extensively curated children's section for decades, we would have to completely bar children from entering our store for fear of criminal liability, should any of them view anything in the rest of our bookstore. This would likely result in the death of our business, the loss of the jobs of me and my coworkers, as well as the death of an important place for the community to gather and share a love of learning and literacy. HB 1375 would place an onerous burden on the businesses that provide our children with books to read at all. If you are invested in the education and literacy of our children, you will vote against HB 1375. Thank you.

Clay Thomas, Mr.

Self

Schertz, TX

I am looking for less government intrusion and not more. It is a parent's or guardian's responsibility to monitor what their children read. It is not the proprietor's. Frivolous lawsuits can affect a book stores bottom line. This bill is shameful and should not be passed in any form whatsoever.

Rosa Mendez  
Books by the Bay  
Deer Park, TX

My name is Rosa Mendez, and I am the owner of Books by the Bay, a Latina-owned independent bookstore in La Porte, Texas. I'm here today because HB 1375 doesn't just threaten my business—it threatens the very heart of what bookstores represent in our communities: safe spaces for curiosity, learning, and connection.

Let me be clear—I understand and respect the desire to protect minors. I believe in thoughtful boundaries. But HB 1375 goes far beyond protection. It weaponizes vague language and opens the door for anyone to bring a civil lawsuit against a bookstore simply because a minor accessed a book they personally deem “harmful.” It assumes bad intent where there is none and punishes bookstores for doing what they've always done—offer a wide range of literature for people of all ages, with integrity and responsibility.

I've been in the book industry for only seven months, but I've been a lifelong reader because of spaces like mine. Libraries and local bookstores shaped my identity. They were places where I found mirrors of my own experience and windows into others'. Now, I've created that space for my own community—especially for young people who are hungry to learn, question, and grow.

At Books by the Bay, we take pride in curating titles responsibly. We don't shove explicit content into the hands of children. We work closely with parents, teachers, and our neighbors to foster an open yet conscientious environment. But under this bill, even carrying a graphic novel or award-winning young adult title could make us targets for costly lawsuits. That's not protecting communities—it's dismantling them.

What we need isn't HB 1375. What we need is clarity and collaboration. We booksellers are more than willing to be part of the conversation around setting clear, thoughtful standards for content labeling or age recommendations. But we must do so in a way that protects First Amendment rights, respects the intelligence of our communities, and doesn't silence important voices under the threat of civil litigation.

Please vote NO on HB 1375. Keep Texas bookstores open. Keep the doors of knowledge and imagination open for the next generation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kailea HUMPHREYS  
SELF  
Dallas, TX

I support HB 1375, which removes the legal loopholes that allow obscene and explicit materials to be shown in schools under the guise of “educational content.” These loopholes are unacceptable. Material that would be banned in Texas prisons should never be accessible to minors in a classroom.

Protecting children from harmful sexual content is not censorship—it's basic responsibility. HB 1375 aligns school standards with Texas law and reinforces our commitment to keeping schools safe and developmentally appropriate learning environments.

Please support HB 1375 to strengthen protections for students across our state.

Chelsea Tresp  
Bibliobar Bookstore  
Murphy, TX

As the owner of a newly opened independent bookstore in the community, I am deeply concerned about the potential implications of this bill. Like many small businesses, we simply cannot afford the financial burden of potential lawsuits or the risk of alienating any part of our customer base.

Our mission is to provide access to books for readers of all ages, and we take great care in curating and clearly labeling our sections. However, we also believe it is the responsibility of parents and guardians to guide and monitor what is appropriate for their own children.

Policies that shift this responsibility onto small businesses place an undue burden on us and threaten our ability to serve our community as inclusive, welcoming spaces for learning, growth, and discovery.

Catherine Gullotta  
Self / bookstore employee  
Austin, TX

This bill, no matter the intent, will hurt small businesses and independently owned bookstores. Austin claims to be about “staying weird” and keeping the history of Austin alive, and that is done through small businesses, especially bookstores. They bring the community together physically and emotionally. I have never seen people rally together to defend something more than a local business that is an integral part of the community.

The bill is vague and can be easily taken advantage of by serial litigators. Anyone can try and make a quick buck by filing frivolous lawsuits that attack bookstores. The majority of them are small, local, and self financed, so they cannot afford to defend themselves from people with malicious intent. Bookstores are already working on tight margins and anyone with a grievance against their principles, people, or content can put them all out of business using the terminology in this bill. Our duty as citizens of Austin is to protect our local businesses, not give ammunition to people who wish to see them fail.

Andrea Robison  
Self  
Abilene, TX

Please do not support this bill. This is the antithesis of American ideals of freedom of speech and the democratic exchange of free ideas. It caters only to a single religious freedom at the expense of other religious freedoms. This opens up anyone and anything to persecution over someone’s arbitrary ideas of what is and is not acceptable. This is not the government’s place. Please remember what you stand for and vote against this bill.

Jennifer Gregory  
Self, Mechanical Engineer  
Austin, TX

It is already illegal to sell content that is harmful to minors. This will only publish small bookstores and businesses, who are already running on thin margins

Vickie Dillow  
Self  
Waxahachie, TX

Please pass this legislation, we need to have legal ability to fight this filth.

Bradley Walker  
Self/Graphid Artist  
Arlington, TX

Hi, my name is Brad Walker. I live in Arlington. I am calling to voice opposition to HB 1375 that will be heard during the Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee hearing on Wednesday. I've been watching the rise of book challenges and book bans in our Texas public schools and public libraries for the past several years, and have been assured that I don't need to worry, because I can still buy the books from the bookstore. HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries. Please don't interfere with my family's ability to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools, by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Please don't vote HB 1375 out of committee.

Shannon Ayres  
Self  
Frisco, TX

I am in strong support of this bill and ask that you pass HB 1375

Matt Albrecht  
Self-Business Owner  
Fort Worth, TX

These bills need to be passed. As a proud Texas, I want our state to lead the charge in being a safe and prosperous state! Our citizens, young and old, deserve to be stewarded well and we can't continue to knowingly allow perversion to be rampant in our society. I pray people do a better job of stewarding their families within their own walls but as far as the government's place in the equation, it needs to be a protector, not an enabler! Please make the right decision and pass these bills!

Taeler Kallmerten  
Self  
Austin, TX

I strongly urge representatives to vote down this bill. It's a destruction to first amendment rights and would be detrimental to our community which thrives on having bookstores as a meeting place. It is not the responsibility of the bookstore to keep certain books out of kids hands. That is an individual right for the parent. To give the local government the right to hold the bookstore liable is unconstitutional.

Jessica Wolfson  
self  
Austin, TX

Hi, my name is Jessica. I live in Austin. I am emailing to voice opposition to HB 1375 that will be heard by Representative Schatzline during the Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee hearing on Wednesday. I've been watching the rise of book challenges and book bans in our Texas public schools and public libraries for the past several years, and have been assured that I don't need to worry, because I can still buy the books from the bookstore. HB 1375 appears to be trying to scare booksellers out of carrying and selling the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries. Please don't interfere with my family's ability to shop for books that are becoming harder to find in our libraries and schools, by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits. Please don't vote HB 1375 out of committee.

Elyce Mouskondis  
Self  
Dallas, TX

I ask that you support HB 1375 to close all doors in allowing explicit material for children to see in schools, library's and etc. This is not allowed prisons, so why are we allowing it in our schools?

Mary Woodard

Self/Retired

Desoto, TX

I OPPOSED to HB 1375 that will be heard during the Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee hearing on Wednesday. HB 1375 is a blatant attempt to bully and intimidate booksellers from carrying the kinds of books that have been targeted by book banners in schools and public libraries.

Please don't interfere with my family's right to access and buy books that we want by opening up our local bookstores to frivolous lawsuits.

Please vote AGAINST HB 1375.

Alyse Mervosh

self / owner of Curio Mrvosa Books

Taylor, TX

I strongly oppose HB 1375. I own a small bookstore, the only physical bookstore in our small town. It is open to all ages, and families often browse our shelves, sharing the love of reading and the joy of books. As a small business owner, I'm shocked that the legislature is looking to create ways for lawsuits to be brought against private businesses like mine. This is the opposite of business friendly and could have devastating unintended consequences for entrepreneurs in this state. I can't believe Texas is considering legalizing lawfare against its own homegrown companies.

Please do not vote HB 1375 out of committee. Thank you for your time.

Lesly Capote

Self

Austin, TX

This is absurd. Do not pass this. This will hurt small businesses! Especially bookstore owners who are already navigating an extremely tough environment. Please reconsider!

Ally Raskin

self

Dallas, TX

I fully support this bill

Haven Foster

self

Abilene, TX

censorship leads to fascism