Open Letter: North Carolina children’s book creators call for repeal of HB2

We, the undersigned, are children’s book creators, writers, and illustrators who live and work in North Carolina. We are appalled by the new law HB2, as it places our state on the wrong side of civil and human rights and history. We call for the North Carolina legislature and the governor to repeal this discriminatory law.

As writers and artists, our craft requires empathy, imagination, and respect for the truth. We work with the timeless themes of children’s literature, among them belonging, justice, fairness, love, and liberty. The Latin root of the word liberty, liber, meaning free, is, after all, also the word for book.

The General Assembly claims this law provides for “the protection of women and children.” Instead, HB2 allows discrimination against a selected class of people and will subject them to humiliation in the course of taking care of a basic human need. The sections that strike down the rights of local governments to set wages and standards of employment make it harder for North Carolina citizens to earn a decent living and support their families. Finally, the law takes away from all North Carolinians the right to sue for employment discrimination in state court.

We are fiercely committed to tolerance, inclusiveness, and equal rights for all. We will continue to strive to write and illustrate exceptional and inspiring books for all young people. We will continue to talk about all kinds of books in libraries, schools, bookstores, and other venues to our young constituency, and to tell the truth as we see it.

North Carolina is our home. We want that home to be a place where everyone is welcome.

Repeal HB2, all of it.

Jacqueline K. Ogburn
Clay Carmichael
Louise Hawes
Megan E. Bryant
Frances M. Wood
J.J. Johnson
Monika Schroeder
Lisa Williams Kline
Virginia Wright-Frierson
Barbara Younger
Bonnie J. Doerr
Constance Lombardo
Eileen Heyes
Jake Bible
Beth Revis
Mary Stewart
Barbara O’Connor

Allan Wolf
Kyle T. Webster
C.M. Surrisi
Robin Kirk
Kelly L. Dyksterhouse
Laura R. Wagner
Alexandra Duncan
Douglas Gibson
Luli Gray
Alan Gratz
John Claude Bemis
Sheila Turnage
Frances O’Roark Dowell
Eleanor E. Tate
Joanne O’Sullivan
Susie Wilde
Laura J. Bryant

Carole Boston Weatherford
Rosemarie Gulla, publisher, Alazar Press
Donna Washington
Megan Shepherd
Kelly Starling Lyons
Julie Fortenberry
Niki Masse Schoenfeldt
Cathy East Dubowski
Stephanie Perkins
Amy Reed
Laura Boffa
Jodi Lynn Anderson
Michelle Annette Moore (Groce)
Jaye Robin Brown

These independent booksellers are also signing in solidarity.

Suzanne and Dave Lucey, Page 158 Books, Wake Forest
Brian Lampkin, Scuppernong Books, Greensboro
Sally Brewster, Park Road Books, Charlotte
Land Arnold, Letters Bookshop, Durham
Jamie Fiocco, Flyleaf Books, Chapel Hill
Linda-Marie Barrett and Emoke B’Racz, Malaprops Books, Asheville
Leslie Hawkins, Spellbound Children’s Bookshop, Asheville
Leslie Lanier, Books to be Red, Ocracoke
Wanda Jewell, Southern Independent Booksellers Alliance
Gee Gee Rosell, Buxton Village Books, Inc., Buxton
Jacob and Alyssa Holster, Uprising Coffee & Books, Eden
Barbara Galvin, Two Sisters Bookery, Wilmington
Betty Schumacher, The Bookshop of Chapel Hill
Sarah Goddin and Carol Moyer, Quail Ridge Books, Raleigh
Keebe Fitch, McIntyre’s Books, Fearrington Village
Tom Campbell, The Regulator Bookshop, Durham
Christopher Wilcox, City Lights Bookstore, Sylva