

The Honorable Meg Loughran Cappel
Illinois State Senate
623 Capitol Building
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Dear Senator Loughran Cappel:

As authors proudly rooted in the State of Illinois, we write as one to voice our serious concerns over legislation pending in the state legislature. While we are the first to champion the essential mission of our local libraries, a recently passed bill in the House—[HB 5236](#)—seeks to regulate how authors and publishers license ebooks and audiobooks to libraries. This legislation, if passed, would take away our rights to make decisions about our creative works—decisions that allow us and future generations of writers to earn a living from our craft.

Access to digital literary works is far more convenient now than ever before. But there are specific challenges that digital library lending poses to the literary ecosystem and the well-being of creators whose livelihood is inextricably tied to the hard work of expressing our ideas onto paper and creating beloved stories. We understand the desire to support libraries, but we ask that it not be done on the backs of Illinois authors and the literary community.

Authors should be able to control their own creative works and deserve fair compensation, no matter how people choose to read. Like all creative industries, licensing protects our intellectual property and incentivizes us to create new works. Writing a book is a massive investment of time and resources. This investment has historically been recognized and protected, with the U.S. Constitution and federal law on our side. These works are our intellectual property, and we have the exclusive right to decide when, how, and whether to license them to the public. Proposed state mandates attempt to take away our rights and treat our creative expressions like mass-produced commodities, such as road salt or floor wax. This is not fair and devalues our labor and risks exposing our work to theft and exploitation, including from AI companies.

The government telling public libraries what books they can and can't purchase is a dangerous precedent. This legislation ties the hands of Illinois libraries and dictates what they can and can't license on behalf of their library patrons. This is a slippery slope and a precedent that libraries would be better served to avoid.

Illinois is our home, and we come from all over the state. Like you, we love our local libraries. We want our books on their physical and digital shelves. However, we ask that you do not pursue legislation that undermines our rights and our creative works and harms our livelihoods. This legislation would harm our state's literary community. We urge you to protect authors and vote NO on HB 5236.

Sincerely,