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**Statement by Skip Dye, Penguin Random House
Chairman, Intellectual Freedom Taskforce
House Education Committee
ACLU-NH Opposition to HB324
Hearing: March 5, 2025**

I submit this testimony on behalf of Penguin Random House, the world's largest trade book publisher, expressing our concern over House Bill 324 (HB 324). While HB 324 seeks to address genuinely held parental concerns, the bill lacks necessary protections to mitigate concerns over censorship.

HB 324 is problematic due to overly broad language, redundancy with existing laws, and potential intimidation of educators and librarians that will negatively affect book and material selection in New Hampshire's schools and libraries. As a general-interest publisher with a mission to create books for everyone, we urge the committee to reject HB 324 as currently written. We would like to discuss proposed changes that would accomplish the bill's goals while preserving intellectual freedom.

Overly Broad and Redundant

The language in HB 324 is troublingly vague. The bill expands the scope of what materials could be deemed "harmful," yet offers little clarity as to what content might fall under this category. New Hampshire law, through RSA 571-B, already addresses the provision of harmful materials to minors. HB 324 introduces further measures beyond RSA 571-B, which adds an unnecessary layer complexity. Additionally, schools and libraries have existing policies for addressing objections to materials, allowing parents and guardians to express concerns in an organized manner.
Intimidation of Educators and Librarians

As it is written currently, HB 324 risks causing a chilling effect, intimidating educators and librarians into removing books with significant educational value due to the objections of a loud minority of citizens. Based on our significant experience in reviewing and managing legislation like this, we know that the vagueness of the law will lead to self-censorship, with educators hesitating to recommend valuable books on race, gender, history, and identity to avoid conflicts. Without anti-retaliation provisions for educators and librarians, the bill contributes to the culture of intimidation of these professionals and could cause them to go against their own professional judgment and training.

A Law Causing Confusion and Fear, Not Protecting Children

As written, HB 324 will not accomplish its stated goal of protecting students, but will create confusion among educators, librarians, and school boards. Ultimately, it will deprive young



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readers access to literature that is crucial for their intellectual and emotional development. And without non-discrimination provisions, the lowered standard in this bill may be weaponized against minority voices.

We respectfully urge you to reject HB 324 and to support policies that truly protect students while preserving the principles of intellectual freedom. We work on bills in many state contexts and would be happy to meet and make ourselves available to develop language that achieves both of these goals.

Sincerely,

Skip Dye

Chairman

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