

National Coalition Against Censorship

19 Fulton Street, Suite 407
New York, NY 10038
tel: (212) 807-6222
fax: (212) 806-6245
e-mail: ncac@ncac.org
web: www.ncac.org

Statement in support of *Bad Little Children's Books* (Abrams, 2016)

As organizations dedicated to protecting intellectual freedom, the freedom to write, and the freedom to read, we are concerned about recent attacks on a humorous book, *Bad Little Children's Books*, which has recently come under attack by critics who are offended by its satirical send-up of children's books and contemporary culture.

The publisher, ABRAMS, describes the book as “edgy, politically incorrect parodies that speak to the bad little kid in all of us.” Written for an adult audience, the book includes “parodies of children's book covers from more innocent times... [and] leaves no bad joke unmade.”

Humor that employs satire and parody is often the subject of criticism and controversy. Some of the most significant comedians of the recent past - Lenny Bruce, Richard Pryor, Tom Lehrer, Trey Parker and Matt Stone, Sarah Silverman, Margaret Cho, and many others - have been vilified for doing precisely what this book does – make fun of social niceties, conventional wisdom, and sacred cows. At the same time, there are many who appreciate this type of humor, as evidenced by other readers' reaction to the book, like one who wrote “So distasteful, it's delicious. Hysterical.”

We support ABRAMS' decision to publish this, or any other book, even if it offends some readers. We urge the company not to accede to pressure to withdraw the book, but to stand for the proposition that it is the right of authors to write as they choose and of individuals to decide for themselves what to read. After all, anyone who doesn't like the book doesn't have to buy it.

As defenders of free expression and intellectual freedom, we value the incredibly rich array of books that publishers make available for readers with different needs, interests, and sensibilities. It would be a tragic loss if publishers withdrew or declined to publish any book because some people don't like it. Our bookstores and library shelves would become barren places indeed.

Endorsed by:

American Booksellers Association
Association of American Publishers
Authors Guild
Comic Book Legal Defense Fund
National Coalition Against Censorship
National Council of Teachers of English
Office for Intellectual Freedom, American Library Association
PEN America

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(List in formation)

Joan E. Bertin
Executive Director

NCAC PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Actors' Equity Association
American Association of
School Administrators
American Association of
University Professors
American Association of
University Women
American Booksellers for Free Expression
American Civil Liberties Union
American Ethical Union
American Federation of Teachers
American Jewish Committee
American Library Association
American Literary Translators Association
American Orthopsychiatric Association
American Society of Journalists & Authors
Americans United for Separation of
Church & State
Association of American Publishers
Authors Guild
Catholics for Choice
Children's Literature Association
College Art Association
Comic Book Legal Defense Fund
The Creative Coalition
Directors Guild of America
The Dramatists Guild of America
Dramatists Legal Defense Fund
Educational Book & Media Association
First Amendment Lawyers Association
Free Speech Coalition
International Literacy Association
Lambda Legal
Modern Language Association National
Center for Science Education National
Communication Association National
Council for the Social Studies National
Council of the Churches National
Council of Jewish Women National
Council of Teachers of English National
Education Association National Youth
Rights Association
The Newspaper Guild/CWA
PEN America
People For the American Way
Planned Parenthood Federation
of America
Project Censored
SAG-AFTRA
Sexuality Information & Education
Council of the U.S.
Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators
Student Press Law Center
Union for Reform Judaism
Union of Democratic Intellectuals
Unitarian Universalist Association
United Church of Christ
Office of Communication
United Methodist Church,
United Methodist Communications
Women's American ORT
Woodhull Freedom Foundation
Writers Guild of America, East
Writers Guild of America, West