

# NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST CENSORSHIP

September 22, 2021

Craig A. Shubert  
Mayor, City of Hudson  
1140 Terex Road  
Hudson, OH 44236

Re: *642 Things to Write About*

Dear Mayor Shubert:

The National Coalition Against Censorship is a coalition of national nonprofit groups dedicated to protecting the First Amendment rights of K-12 students, teachers, and staff. We are writing in regard to the following message that you recently delivered to the Board of Education of the Hudson City School District in regard to the use of the book, *642 Things to Write About*, in a college course taught to high school students on the Hudson High School campus:

It has come to my attention that your educators are distributing essentially what is child pornography in the classroom. I've spoken to a judge this evening. She's already confirmed that. So I'm going to give you a simple choice. You either choose to resign from this Board of Education or you will be charged.

The accusation that educators are distributing child pornography is very serious. Child pornography is criminal under the law as well as morally despicable. Therefore a frivolous public accusation alleging that educators are guilty of such a crime is not only unacceptable, it may be considered defamatory. Such an unfounded accusation also undermines the true gravity of the heinous crime of producing child pornography.

Child pornography, by legal definition, limited to photographs of sexual abuse. As you are surely aware, *642 Things to Write About* contains no such images. Nor does the book contain any verbal descriptions of sexually explicit conduct. The only possibly controversial element are a couple of writing prompts (among 642 such) that allude to sexual experience.

It appears that you are illegitimately trying to intimidate educators into suppressing a controversial book by falsely claiming that the book contains illegal child pornography. Such intimidation tactics grossly violate First

## NCAC PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Actors' Equity Association  
AICA-USA  
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 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  
Freedom to Read Foundation  
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice  
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 NewsGuild-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 Sexual Freedom Alliance  
Writers Guild of America, East  
Writers Guild of America, West

Amendment principles, which restrict government officials from suppressing ideas they dislike.

We urge you to withdraw your frivolous accusations and publicly apologize to the Board, to the citizens of Hudson, and to the district's students and to victims of sexual abuse everywhere for misrepresenting a slightly controversial writing prompt as the serious crime of child pornography.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Finan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christopher Finan  
Executive Director  
National Coalition Against Censorship

CC: Phillip Herman, Superintendent