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Committee on Education & the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 3 million members of the National Education Association, educators who are devoted to teaching and supporting students across America, we urge you to vote NO on H.R. 7661, the national book ban bill. Votes on this issue may be included in the NEA Report Card on the 119th Congress.

H.R. 7661 is aimed at distracting and dividing Americans by restricting whose stories are allowed on bookshelves, and using threats to funding as an enforcement tool.

In effect, the legislation makes Congress the “national school board,” taking decision-making away from local school boards, educators, and families. Its intentionally vague wording would cause confusion and misinterpretation that would harm the healthy communication channels that exist between educators—professionals with experience and expertise—and parents. The language could even impact how subjects such as health, science, and art are taught and discussed.

Ultimately, H.R. 7661 is not about protecting students, but giving politicians the power to exclude voices they do not like or with whom they disagree. The bill appears to target the LGBTQ+ community, and specifically, intersex, transgender, and nonbinary individuals, by setting a dangerous precedent: defining anything that involves “gender dysphoria or transgenderism” as sexually oriented and banning those materials.

Educators cannot prepare young people to succeed in our diverse nation and interconnected world by removing books from library shelves and curricula, restricting what students read, and disregarding educators’ expertise. We prepare students for the future by planting the seeds for lifelong curiosity and learning and nurturing their skills of discernment and reasoning. Those goals will not be achieved by telling students what they can and cannot read.

Please ensure that schools are places where every student can access books that reflect and respect a wide variety of experiences, perspectives, families, and communities. Vote NO on H.R. 7661, the national book ban bill.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Johnson Trinca
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association