

April 14, 2016

To The Honorable Governor Pat McCrory and members of the North Carolina General Assembly,

As the owners and managers of independent bookstores, part of our mission is to provide that “third place”, an additional public space other than home or work where folks can gather to discuss issues important to our community. Ray Oldenburg, in his book, *The Great Good Place*, “argues that “third places... are the heart of a community's social vitality and the grassroots of democracy.” As independent bookstores providing that third place in communities across our state, we believe it is essential to be non-discriminatory, inclusive and tolerant, to promote freedom of speech and equality, and to guard against censorship and unfair treatment.

Another part of our mission is to be profitable; to allow ourselves and our employees to earn a respectable living. What both of these mission statements share is the need for people to visit our stores and become customers. Authors have already started to cancel appearances at North Carolina bookstores over what the ACLU describes as “the most extreme anti-LGBT measure in the country.” This can and will have a real negative impact on our businesses. It doesn’t make sense, financially or otherwise, to choose discrimination over inclusion. Unfortunately, that’s exactly what lawmakers have done by passing HB2.

Company after company is withdrawing from doing business in NC until this legislation is repealed. Retailers and others are already feeling the economic impact of this legislation and we are sure, because of the momentum behind more businesses, conferences, artists, rock stars, authors, and ordinary citizens choosing places other than North Carolina to spend their vacations, the worst financial impact is yet to come.

Small Business Majority’s polling found 67 percent of North Carolina’s entrepreneurs believe North Carolina should have a law prohibiting employment discrimination against LGBT people. Nationally, two-thirds of small businesses say business owners shouldn’t be able to deny goods or services to LGBT individuals. (more info on this polling is here: <http://smallbusinessmajority.com/small-business-research/non-discrimination/index.php>)

For North Carolina, the choice between small businesses and discrimination should be clear. We hope our lawmakers make the right decision and repeal HB2.

All Booked Up, Apex

Blue Ridge Books, Waynesville

Bookmarks, Winston-Salem

Books to be Red, Ocracoke

Books Unlimited, Fayetteville

Buxton Village Books, Buxton

C. Clayton Thompson – Booksellers, Boone

City Lights Bookstore, Sylva

Country Bookshop, Southern Pines

Downtown Books, Manteo

Ducks Cottage Coffee & Books, Duck

Flyleaf Books, Chapel Hill

Letters Bookshop, Durham

Malaprop's Bookstore & Cafe, Asheville

McIntyre's Fine Books, Pittsboro
Novels & Novelties Bookstore, Hendersonville
Old Books on Front Street, Wilmington
Page 158 Books, Wake Forest
Pomegranate Books, Wilmington
Quail Ridge Books, Raleigh
Quarter Moon Bookstore, Topsail Beach
Regulator Bookshop, Durham
Scuppernong Books, Greensboro
Scuttlebutt Nautical Books & Bounty, Beaufort
Spellbound Children's Bookshop, Asheville
Sunrise Books, High Point
The Book Shelf, Tryon
The Coffeehound Bookshop, Louisburg
The Dollar Book Exchange, Raleigh
The Island Bookstore, Corolla
The Island Bookstore, Duck
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