



August 29, 2024

VIA Email to the Office of the Governor and Author

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 1825 (Muratsuchi) – California Freedom to Read Act – REQUEST FOR
GOVERNOR'S SIGNATURE**

Dear Governor Newsom:

The League of Women Voters of California writes to request your signature on AB 1825 (Muratsuchi), which prohibits public libraries from banning books or other materials because of the topic or content of the book. It explicitly prohibits book bans that discriminate on the basis of race, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, political affiliation, or socioeconomic status, or on the basis that the materials under consideration contain inclusive and diverse perspectives, or on the basis that the materials may include sexual content, unless that content qualifies as obscene under Supreme Court precedent. The legislation would ensure that public libraries in California continue to be a source of information and inspiration to persons of all ages, cultural backgrounds, and economic statuses.

The League supports access by all persons to public library services as a major source of knowledge and information necessary for informed, active

participation in a democratic society. We believe that our democratic government depends on informed and active participation at all levels of government. Libraries provide essential resources to educate the public and promote civic engagement. Furthermore, many book bans target works that relate to issues of race, gender identity and sexuality. By stripping shelves of literature related to particular communities we erase their existence, scrub out their history, deny their representation, lose the opportunity to expand everyone's knowledge and understanding, and participate in the marginalization of large swathes of society.

Libraries are essential for information, education, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. They help us connect to and find our place in the larger world. They provide access to books that offer teachable moments for readers of all ages and expand our understanding of people with different backgrounds, ideas, and beliefs. A person's right to use a library and access meaningful literature should not be denied or abridged solely because of personal characteristics, age, background, or views.

Librarians are trained not to impose their own thoughts and opinions on which ideas are right, but to make knowledge and ideas available so that people have the freedom to choose what to read. Librarians receive extensive professional training to develop and curate collections to meet the broad and diverse interests of their communities, which include, but are not limited to, literary value and the developmental appropriateness of material.

Removing and banning books from public libraries are acts of government censorship and run counter to our country's commitment to freedom of expression and the right to receive information. They diminish our humanity and

Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi

Page 3

August 29, 2024

narrow our world view. **For these reasons, the League of Women Voters of California is in strong support of AB 1825 and requests your signature. Thank you.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Stephanie Doute". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Stephanie Doute

Executive Director