



## Bookmarks

### **A Letter to Authors from Bookmarks**

As writers; as readers; as supporters of North Carolina's Bookmarks literary arts nonprofit; and, most importantly, as parents, friends, and supporters of LGBTQ children, we applaud and appreciate the authors and illustrators who put your names to "An Open Letter to Our North Carolina Readers," which offers such stirring support to the children of North Carolina. We thank you for that, knowing better than anyone that our children need all the support they can get right now.

We urge you, though, to extend that support by continuing to come to North Carolina for events such as Bookmarks' Festival of Books & Authors. Your open letter says "Each one of us will have to consider our participation in conferences and festivals in North Carolina while this law is in place." By all means, consider, and we hope your considerations will help you understand that those conferences and festivals offer you your best chance to support and encourage North Carolina's young readers.

At these festivals, you have the chance to meet and talk to thousands of North Carolina readers, of all ages, about the values of "equality, inclusion, and fair treatment." Most of North Carolina's literary conferences and festivals are organized by nonprofits like Bookmarks, rather than an agency of the state government. They bring together writers and readers thanks to the hard work and passionate dedication of ordinary North Carolinians, not a mandate from the capital.

To refuse to appear at one of these festivals would not harm those who wrote House Bill 2 (in secret, and rushed to a vote without time for true public review and comment). Instead, your absence would harm the North Carolinians working hard for the same values you espouse, and – more crucially – the young North Carolinians who have a desperate need right now for words of kindness and support – for your words.

Many of you have been to North Carolina before. Some of you are from North Carolina. You know most of us are warm, welcoming, and fair to all. You know that most of us are as outraged by House Bill 2 as you are, if not more so. You know, like the popular hashtag says, that We Are Not This.

Please accept our invitations to visit, to read your work, to speak your minds. Please come read and talk to our children. Show us in person about fairness, inclusion, and affirmation.

It is now that we need you the most.

**[www.bookmarksn.org](http://www.bookmarksn.org)**