



Dear Booksellers,

This week we did horrific harm when we included an anti-trans book in ABA's July box mailing to members. Last week, we did terrible and racist harm when featuring the bestseller *Blackout* by Dhonielle Clayton, Tiffany D. Jackson, Nic Stone, Angie Thomas, Ashley Woodfolk, and Nicola Yoon with the wrong cover image, conflating it with an image of the cover of a book by a different Black author, a right-wing extremist.

We traumatized and endangered members of the trans community. We erased Black authors, conflated Black authors, and put the authors in danger through a forced association. We further marginalized communities we want to support.

There is nothing that I can say that will make this right. This should not have happened. I want to apologize for both of these harms and for the pain that ABA caused. But I know only action matters. These were egregious, harmful acts that caused violence and pain. One negligent, irresponsible, and racist; the other negligent, irresponsible, and transphobic. (The latter was not a free speech decision.) I am working with our team to determine the root cause as well as the steps ABA needs to take to be held accountable and to make changes. It is the next actions I take and that the ABA team takes that are critical now. We started initiating these efforts after last week's incident with *Blackout*, and they are now part of a bigger process and discussion that is still our top priority.

We will be following up with members over the next few weeks to report on our specific steps. The process to inform those steps will include listening to impacted members; conferring with members of ABA's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee; institutionalizing more of our diversity, equity, and inclusion work; revising our internal procedures and checks and balances; discussing with our team the impact of this violence on our members and our colleagues; changing the submission, vetting, and distribution process for the box mailing program; automating some of our online content to eliminate unconscious bias; reviewing all of our programs and communication; and more. Though we know the harm these actions caused is obvious to those impacted and many others, we will also share resources that speak to why these acts are violent.

Last year, ABA changed its ends policies to explicitly state that ABA's commitment to antiracism, inclusion, representation, and equity should be paramount to all of our work. This commitment has informed some of the most important work we've done this past year, and it has guided us in multiple ways. These incidents are unacceptable and have reminded me of how vigilant ABA must be to live up to this commitment, and what is at stake for our members and our community when we don't.

—ABA CEO Allison Hill