

For Immediate Release: City of Hoboken to become first Book Sanctuary City in New Jersey

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This Wednesday, September 6, the Hoboken City Council will vote on a resolution to declare Hoboken as the first New Jersey municipality to become a Book Sanctuary City. Initiated by Hoboken Public Library Director Jennie Pu, this movement started in 2022 in Chicago as a response to the increasing censorship and return of book bans (see: <https://www.booksanctuary.org/>). This vote by the Hoboken City Council follows unanimous support for a similar resolution that was passed by the Hoboken Public Library Board on August 22.

It is critically important that the City of Hoboken stands proudly in support of this initiative because many of these bans seek to silence the voices of people of color and the LGBTQ+ community – which runs counter to the declaration that Hoboken is “a Fair and Welcoming City.” We stand together to jointly support and adopt the American Library Association’s Freedom to Read Statement and will continue to support community events that celebrate endangered books and encourage critical discussion of censored stories – such as this past June’s Banned Book Read-a-Thon and the ongoing support for diverse books at our Little Free Library locations across the City.

Quote from Jennie:

From Emily Jabbour, Hoboken City Council President: “It is more important than ever that communities acknowledge the need to establish safe spaces to tell and share stories that are being censored around the country – most often the stories of people of color and the LGBTQ+ community. I am proud to stand with the Hoboken Public Library and the incredible work that they have done to bring awareness to this issue, starting with the very successful Banned Book Read-A-Thon in June and now with this initiative that will declare Hoboken as the first Book Sanctuary City in the state of New Jersey.”

“I proudly stand with Hoboken Public Library Director Jennie Pu and the Library’s Board of Trustees in support of establishing the Hoboken Public Library as a Book Sanctuary for banned books,” said Councilperson Phil Cohen. “I hope other New Jersey governing bodies join Hoboken and Chicago to support their libraries as part of the “Read-sistance,” establishing more safe spaces for censored stories, just as Hoboken’s governing body stands with our Library in support of its Banned Book Read-A-Thon last June.”