

April 17, 2016

Dear Governor Haslam:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Tennessee Library Association Board of Directors and our members as their President. During our Board of Directors meeting last Wednesday night, the Board authorized me to write to you to urge you to veto the legislation which makes the Holy Bible the "State Book" of Tennessee. Our reasons are not in opposition to the Bible, for it is a sacred book that represents the beliefs of many Tennesseans and Christians throughout the world. However, the Bible does not solely belong to Tennessee and could be viewed as exclusionary to other Tennesseans that do not practice Christianity. In light of this, we would urge that the official state book of Tennessee be, instead, representative of a work that is significant to and representative of all Tennesseans. In fact, every year, in cooperation with the Tennessee Association of School Libraries, the Tennessee Library Association awards the Volunteer State Book award to honor the significant contributions of a Tennessee author in the area of intellectual freedom. We have done this for a number of years. More information may be found at <http://www.tasltm.org/vsba>.

We would like to suggest that rather than sign the legislation making the Bible the State Book that the State Librarian, Chuck Sherrill, and members he designates in the Library & Archives be invited to form a committee to work with legislators (or others of your choosing) to select the state book of Tennessee that would celebrate our talented authors in this state.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter!

Best,
Susan L. Jennings
President, 2015-2016
Tennessee Library Association