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Thomas H. Allen
President and
Chief Executive Officer

April 28, 2009

Honorable Ellen Corbett
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5108
Sacramento, California 95814

In Support of SB 320

Dear Senator Corbett:

On behalf of the more than 300 members of the Association of American Publishers (AAP), I am writing to express our strong support for SB 320, which would prohibit California state courts from recognizing a foreign defamation judgment unless the court determines that the judgment satisfies the free speech and free press protections guaranteed by the First Amendment and the California Constitution.

AAP's members have grown increasingly concerned about the threat of libel tourism, a particularly cynical form of international legal forum-shopping which exploits plaintiff-friendly foreign libel laws to punish U.S. authors and publishers and to suppress speech that is protected by the First Amendment. The sale of books over the Internet exposes U.S. authors and publishers to the danger of being sued almost anywhere in the world, and libel tourist litigation is a threat in any country where our strong constitutional free speech protections are absent.

Your legislation would arm California authors and publishers in defending their free-speech rights against meritless and potentially ruinous foreign defamation actions. We applaud your leadership in introducing the bill and urge the California legislature to move quickly in approving this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Allen".

Thomas H. Allen
President and CEO