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August 27, 2009

Hon. Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Governor of California  
State Capitol Building  
Sacramento, CA 95814

By Fax: 916-445-2841  
202-624-5280

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

On behalf of the more than 300 members of the Association of American Publishers (AAP), I am writing to urge your prompt action in signing 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. The bill has been overwhelmingly approved by the California Senate and Assembly and only awaits your signature to become law.

American publishers 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 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. SB 320 will support California's authors and publishers in defending their free-speech rights against meritless and potentially ruinous foreign defamation actions.

We applaud the California legislature's commitment to freedom of expression and hope that the bill will be signed into law without delay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Allen', written in a cursive style.

Tom Allen  
President and CEO