

Jenner & Block Secures Pro Bono Victory in Huntington Beach Library Censorship Case

News

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In a significant pro bono win, Jenner & Block successfully challenged a censorship policy at the City of Huntington Beach's public libraries.

On September 5, Orange County Superior Court Judge Lindsey Martinez granted the firm's petition for writ of mandate, striking down a policy that required parental consent for minors to access books with "sexual content"—a definition so broad that it could have included health education materials, young adult novels, and even classic works of literature such as *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Great Gatsby*.

Filed with co-counsel partnering organizations ACLU of Southern California, the California First Amendment Coalition, and California Legal Aid, the case was brought on behalf of high school students, parents, and community advocacy organization Alianza Translatinx.

The ruling marks a significant judicial interpretation of California's Freedom to Read Act (FTRA), which prohibits public libraries from limiting access to materials based on their content or viewpoint. In rejecting the City's arguments on home-rule authority and mootness, the court affirmed that Huntington Beach's policies violated state law and were unenforceable.

This outcome was the result of the dedicated work of Partners A.J. Thomas and Lauren Greene, Special Counsel Andrew Sullivan, Associates Sarah Lee, Laura Koeller, and Tyler Emeny, Supervising Paralegal Manuel Salas, Legal Practice Assistant Laura Saltzman, and former associate Eddie Crouse.

Related Attorneys

Andrew J. Thomas

Partner

ajthomas@jenner.com

+1 213 239 5155

Lauren M. Greene

Partner
lgreene@jenner.com
+1 213 239 6904

Andrew G. Sullivan

Special Counsel
agsullivan@jenner.com
+1 213 239 2263

Laura K.M. Koeller

Associate
lkoeller@jenner.com
+1 213 239 2230

Sarah Sun Lee

Associate
slee@jenner.com
+1 213 239 2238

Tyler Emeney

Associate
temeney@jenner.com
+1 213 239 2259

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