



BookSmiles

7300 N. Crescent Blvd. #10
Pennsauken, NJ 08110

Feb 27, 2026

Dear Members of Congress,

Nearly ten years ago, I started a passion-project in my garage, inspired by my time in the Navy where service is patriotism, followed by my career teaching high school English in Lindenwold, New Jersey. One of my seniors, a teen mom, admitted to me that she didn't read to her baby girl. When I told her that I read to my kids the day after they were born, she replied, "Mr. Abrams, that's good for you, but that's not what we do in my culture."

I had no verbal response, only a call-to-action to start a book drive among friends. I had no books to give my student, but plenty of my friends did. The donations poured in, my student read to her baby, and I felt great giving away books. I started BookSmiles, which now serves every county in New Jersey, dispensing over 1 million books each year, and rapidly approaching a \$1,000,000 dollar yearly budget - funded so far by private donors.

We've given several hundred thousand quality kids books to food banks. I often tell folks that food banks do the most critical work, feeding hungry children, but book-access programs like ours provide physical tools to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty, providing children a chance to read their way to a better life.

And my students' daughter? She is now a sophomore reading beyond grade level. This can be replicated millions of times over when Senator Kim's bill becomes law.

Thank you so much for considering and advancing the *Open Books, Open Doors Act*.

Sincerely,

Larry Abrams
Founder/Executive Director - BookSmiles
VP of NBAA
larry@booksmiles.org/856-986-2707