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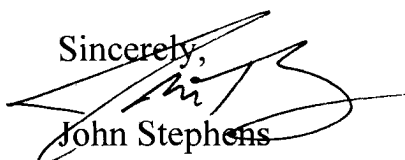
Dear Mr. Reed,

I am a writer who has published two books with Random House Children's Books and am writing to you to express my unhappiness with the settlement reached between the Justice Department and the three major publishers. Much of the success of my books, and my consequent ability to have a career, has been due to the strength of bricks and mortar bookstores. It is my belief that the agency model adopted by the three publishers named in the agreement has, over the past two years, encouraged true competition in the ebook market, and consequently allowed the market as a whole to thrive.

However, if the agreement is allowed to stand, I believe that the trend which had been occurring before the agency model was widely adopted, would resume and accelerate. In other words, the market would come to be adopted by a single player to the detriment of true competition. If this were to happen, there would be, I believe, a steep decline in the number of bookstores across the country.

Bookstores encourage the discovery of new writers, which then leads publishers to take chances on new writers, and which then leads to a rich and varied literary world for our nation of readers. To lose our culture of bookstores seems to me nothing less than to lose the depth and breath of our national literary life. The proposed agreement is the first step toward that eventuality.

Sincerely,



John Stephens