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For Immediate Release

ABFFE Introduces New Harry Potter Merchandise

NEW YORK, NY, May 12, 2004—Harry Potter will help raise funds for the American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression (ABFFE), ABFFE announced today. Warner Brothers, the producer of the movies based on J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter books, including *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, which opens June 4, has authorized ABFFE to issue a limited edition T-shirt and button that urge people to “Fight for Harry Potter and Free Speech for Kids!” Proceeds will support ABFFE’s anti-censorship activities, which have included two successful efforts to overturn bans on Harry Potter books in school libraries. “We are very grateful to Warner Brothers for the opportunity to offer a Harry Potter shirt and button that promote the freedom to read,” ABFFE President Chris Finan said.

The new T-shirt and button, which are based on the cover art for *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, may be purchased individually or for resale. Individual T-shirts are \$20; for quantities of 12 or more, the price is \$10. A bag of 100 buttons is \$50. ABFFE members receive a discount.

Orders can be placed online, www.abffe.com; by downloading an order form, www.abffe.com/HarryPotterOrderForm.pdf, or by calling ABFFE at (212) 587-4025. The T-

shirts and buttons will also be on sale at the ABFFE booth during BookExpo America in Chicago, June 4-6. The booth will be located in the north lobby of the McCormick Place Convention Center.

According to the American Library Association, the Harry Potter books were the most challenged titles in the country from 1999 to 2002. The protests have come mainly from people who believe that the books promote witchcraft.

Last year, ABFFE filed an amicus brief supporting parents who overturned a ban on the Potter books in an Arkansas school district. In 2000, ABFFE helped organize a campaign in Michigan that persuaded a school superintendent to rescind most of the restrictions that he had imposed on the use of the Potter books in classrooms and school libraries. The efforts to ban the Potter books created enormous interest about censorship among kids. In response, ABFFE created kidSPEAK!, www.kidspeakonline.org, a Web site that details the many challenges to their free speech rights.