

Resolution to Support School and Youth Services Librarians Facing Increased Intellectual Freedom Challenges

Whereas intellectual freedom is every learner's right and the freedom to read¹ is essential to all citizens in a democracy;

Whereas intellectual freedom is a Core Value² of the American Library Association;

Whereas the Library Bill of Rights³ affirms all students' right to read through the *Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights* and *Access to Resources and Services in the School Library*⁴;

Whereas our youth, as future voting citizens and leaders of this country, need equitable access to the diverse learning opportunities and resources, including the representation of communities of multiple races, ethnic heritages, geographic origins, gender identities, economic differences, and interests;

Whereas equitable student access and choice in reading, listening, and viewing increases academic outcomes, lays the foundation for a culture of literacy, and inspires lifelong learning;

Whereas for young people, especially for those in underserved communities, school libraries may represent young people's only means of access to curricular and independent reading resources as well as information literacy instruction;

Whereas certified, university-educated professional school librarians follow board-approved policies and procedures, selecting and maintaining collections that are age-appropriate, high-quality, and balanced to meet curricular and personal interests, and promote student choice;

Whereas censorship distorts intellectual dialogue by limiting access and understanding of the representative variety of voices that comprise the richness of American culture, leading to misrepresentation of our ideals, values, history, and thought;

Whereas school libraries across the nation are experiencing an unprecedented number of book challenge campaigns, often catalyzed by organized groups, calling for resource removal and destruction;

Whereas school librarians currently face increasing calls for dismissal and/or prosecution as a result of these same challenge campaigns; and

Whereas historically organized censorship efforts, inadequately resisted, have endangered free societies; now, therefore, be it

resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA) on behalf of its members:

1. commits to ongoing support of all children's right to read, their equitable access to diverse books and informational resources, and their right to library services by:
 - a. Reaffirming that the freedom to read¹ supports active citizens of the future and speaks against censorship of youth library books and resources.
 - b. Upholding a parent's right to decide what their own children can read, but not what other children can read as stated in the Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights⁴ and the Access to Resources and Services in the School Library⁵;
2. reaffirms their support of school librarians who face challenges and threats of prosecution or job loss by:
 - a. Condemning the intimidation of librarians and library workers in or beyond their place of work
 - b. Advocating for strict adherence to library collection and reconsideration policies
 - c. Defending librarians' professional responsibility to ensure their print and digital collections represent a variety of viewpoints that support the diversity of their communities and offer the breadth of history;
3. solicits anti-censorship position statements, endorsements, and partnerships at various ALA levels with stakeholders including educational organizations that support students' right to read, education unions and school administration groups, parent and student groups, ALA state chapters and organizations which include authors, vendors, publishers, and professional publications to support students' right to read;
4. commits to widely disseminating talking points⁵ for librarians, library workers, administrators, and their supporters in school and public libraries to speak to citizens and community stakeholders emphasizing the importance of following established policies and of inclusive library collections;
5. encourages ALA members to become more involved with intellectual freedom efforts in ALA, to act as liaison between other ALA groups and IFRT and IFC, to always report challenges to the Office of Intellectual Freedom (OIF) in support of accurate statistics, to donate to the LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund⁶ supporting library workers who are facing financial difficulties for their support of intellectual freedom, and to join the Freedom to Read Foundation; and
6. commits to speaking with one voice across the Association against threats to students' right to read and threats to their First Amendment rights.

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Endorsers:

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Kimberly Patton, Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) Councilor

Elizabeth Nebeker, Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Councilor

Kathy Lester, Councilor-at-Large, AASL President-Elect

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Dorcas Hand, Texas Chapter Councilor and Freedom to Read Foundation Trustee

Wendy Stephens, Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table (GNCRT) Councilor

K.C. Boyd, DC Chapter Councilor
Deb Sica, Rainbow Round Table Councilor
Leslie Campbell, Ethnic & Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table (EMIERT) Councilor
Erika Long, Tennessee Chapter Councilor and AASL Board Member
Kathleen Breitenbach, Rainbow Round Table Chair
Shauntee Burns-Simpson, Black Caucus American Library Association (BCALA) President
Karen Lemmons, ALA member and BCALA Member
Victor D Baeza, Library Instruction Round Table Councilor.
Barbara Stripling, Freedom to Read Foundation President
Peter Coyl, Freedom of Read Foundation Trustee
Sara Dallas, Councilor at Large and Freedom to Read Foundation Trustee

Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT), endorsed in principle
Freedom to Read Foundation (FTRF)
American Association of School Librarians (AASL)
Association of Library Services to Children (ALSC)
Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA)
Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table (GNCRT)

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Footnotes:

¹ALA. Freedom to Read Statement. <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>

²ALA. Intellectual Freedom. Core Values. <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/corevalues>

³ALA. Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights. <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/minors>

⁴ALA. Access to Resources and Services in the School Library: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights. <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/accessresources>

⁵ALA. Answering Questions about Youth and Access to Library Resources. <https://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/youthresourcesFAQ>

⁶ALA. Leroy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund. <https://www.ala.org/aboutala/affiliates/relatedgroups/merrittfund/merritthumanitarian>

References

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