# DRAFT: Evaluating Library Collections: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*

Libraries should continually develop their collections by adding and removing resources. Considerations outlined in a library collection development and maintenance policy should include but are not limited to, accuracy, currency, relevancy, content, usage, and community interest.

Using the evaluation process to remove resources because they are viewed as controversial, objectionable, or because of personal bias or prejudice violates the principles of intellectual freedom and is in opposition to the *Library Bill of Rights*, which states:

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

Some resources may contain views, opinions, and concepts that were popular or widely held at one time but are now considered inaccurate, offensive, or harmful. While weeding is essential to the collection development process, it should not be used as a deselection tool for controversial materials.[[1]](#footnote-1) In addition, content should not be removed because the content creator may be considered offensive or controversial. Rather than immediately removing these resources, libraries should consider ways to educate and create context for how those views, opinions, and concepts have changed. However, these resources can be subject to evaluation in accordance with collection development and maintenance policies. The evaluation criteria and process may vary depending on the type of library.

As “Diversity in Collection Development: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*” states, “Failure to select resources merely because they may be potentially controversial is censorship, as is withdrawing resources for the same reason.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Library workers should consider the context and placement of resources, in the collection. Diverse viewpoints are a hallmark of libraries’ collections.

The American Library Association opposes censorship from any source, including library workers, faculty, administration, trustees, and elected officials. Libraries have a profound responsibility to validate intellectual freedom by making it possible for the user to choose freely from a variety of offerings. Libraries should adopt guidelines and policies that set forth clear principles for evaluating materials in library collections.

Adopted February 2, 1973, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; June 2, 2008. Revisions proposed for ALA Annual Conference 2019.

1. “Selection & Reconsideration Policy Toolkit for Public, School, & Academic Libraries,” “[Collection Maintenance and Weeding](http://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/selectionpolicytoolkit/weeding),” ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom, January 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “[Diversity in Collection Development: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/diversitycollection),” adopted July 14, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended January 10, 1990; July 2, 2008; and July 1, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)