



South Carolina Library Association

Organized 1915

P.O. Box 1763 • Columbia, SC 29202 • 803.252.1087 • Fax 803.252.0589

scla@capconsc.com • www.SCLA.org

July 26, 2023

Dear Representative Cromer:

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of SCLA in response to your letter, received July 20, 2023, which included the expressed request that SCLA immediately suspend membership in the American Library Association.

SCLA was established in 1915, and in 1944, became affiliated with ALA as a chapter. SCLA has elected officers, our own bylaws and as a chapter of ALA, we have one South Carolina representative to ALA Council, which is the national association's governing body. Through that representative, we ensure that the voices, needs and values of South Carolina's libraries are represented in the policies of the ALA.

We pay no money to ALA. However, through our chapter affiliation, we have access to the professional expertise of ALA staff and benefit from ALA's work to ensure that federal funds for libraries come to South Carolina. All SCLA membership dues go to support continuing education and advocacy for South Carolina's school, academic and public library workers.

ALA's President is an elected, volunteer position, holding office for one year. That position has no authority over SCLA's work or direction. Furthermore, neither ALA nor SCLA has power over the collection decisions that are made across this state in libraries of all kinds. All purchasing and collection decisions are locally governed.

Not unlike other organizations and associations (The American Bar Association, for example), chapters govern themselves while upholding a shared set of values, that are not determined by one person. ALA states that "Chapters have the final authority within ALA for all programs and policies that concern only the area for which the chapter is responsible." SCLA is that authority for South Carolina, not ALA.

SCLA and all libraries in the Palmetto State share a commitment to provide collections that represent all of South Carolina's citizens; to represent views that some may deem controversial, radical, and unpopular and to make those materials freely available to those that want them. The values of intellectual freedom and the freedom to read are ones we share and are willing to defend.

SCLA and its 277 members are committed to ensuring our state's citizens can learn and think freely, are literate, lead fulfilling lives and are prepared for the workforce and for full participation in our democratic process. I know that the Freedom Caucus shares these goals.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads 'Melanie Huggins'.

Melanie Huggins
SCLA President, 2023