

**COUNTY OF IMPERIAL  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY**



**Subject**

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION FORM

**Policy Number**

LIB-PO-017-2025

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The Collection Development Policy was adopted by the Imperial County Board of Supervisors to establish policies governing the acquisition and retention of print and non-print library materials available to the public in all sites of the Imperial County Library System.

**Selection Purpose and Responsibility:**

The collection development policy serves many functions. It is a framework for the growth and development of the Imperial County Free Library collection. It is the responsibility of the County Librarian to select, within budget limitations, those items that best serve the informational needs of the residents of Imperial County. The County Librarian, in consultation with library staff, will oversee the selection, acquisition, and maintenance of the library collection of Imperial County Free Library System according to the guidelines contained in this policy as adopted by the Imperial County Board of Supervisors. This policy includes the acquisition of materials by purchase as well as through donation to the library system, governs the process by which the public can request reconsideration of items in the collection, and also includes the process by which obsolete, worn, and damaged materials are removed from the collection.

**Selection Method and Criteria:**

Imperial County Free Library selects a broad range of materials to accommodate the diversity of preference, reading levels, languages, and interests of users of all ages. Items provided include current materials as well as standard authors, titles and subjects. Resource sections and special collections enhance the County Library's ability to serve its community's needs.

Selection of materials is based on the subject knowledge and expertise of the County Librarian, along with recommendations from the public and other library staff; professional and popular media reviews; and evaluation of review copies from publishers. Budget and space limitations require a focus on materials that appeal to a broad range of users. No materials are excluded or removed from the County Library on the basis of the author's race or nationality, their political, social, or religious beliefs. Materials dealing with controversial views are judged as entire works, not on isolated passages or sections.

**Criteria for selection of materials**

The Imperial County Free Library System has an inclusive approach to selection and affirms the public's right to choose and read with the freedom essential to a democracy. The Imperial County Free Library will adhere to the principles of the "Freedom to Read

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Statement" of the American Library Association (attached as an addendum to this policy). Each community library provides materials presenting various points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times. Material dealing with controversial views or subjects is judged on the basis of the entire work and not on isolated passages or sections. Matters such as the race or nationality, or the political, social, or religious views of the author are not factors affecting the evaluation of material. The following criteria are used to evaluate the appropriateness of materials added to the library collection:

- Accuracy of information
- Quality of treatment
- Merit, awards, or critical acclaim
- Timeliness or permanent value
- Public interest or popular demand
- Circulation of similar materials
- Readability or literary style
- Social and contemporary significance
- Reputation of the author or publisher
- Cost and availability
- Physical durability, attractiveness and other format characteristics
- Inclusion in standard bibliographies or indexes
- Existence of authoritative, published reviews
- Relation to existing collection and other materials on the subject.

The County Library also considers the availability of materials and resources in other libraries. The County Library recognizes its obligation to provide general reference to meet the needs of customers, however, it is not the purpose of the Imperial County Free Library System to function as a research library. To strengthen its services and resources, the County Library actively participates in resource sharing agreements with other libraries via Interlibrary Loan. The County Librarian has the prerogative to delegate to library staff the responsibility of maintenance and de-selection of library materials. No purchased or donated item may be added or removed from the library collection without prior approval, in writing, by the County Librarian. Recommendations for selections to be added to the library collection shall be sent in writing to the County Librarian. After those items have been approved by the County Librarian, those items shall be purchased or accepted for donation by library staff. Responsibility for recommendations for county library acquisitions will be made by the County Librarian.

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**Zip Books Program:**

Imperial County Free Library System is an active participant of the California State Library Zip Books Program. The State Library helps public libraries run the Zip Books Program by providing grants to buy books and audiobooks for library users for participating libraries. Zip Books supports libraries that need the funding the most. On average, the participating libraries receiving Zip Books grant funds typically have 24% less funding per person and 28% smaller budgets to purchase books, audiobooks and other collection materials. Zip Books provides library users with speedy access to books and audiobooks that are not available at their local libraries. The program allows a library user to request an item, the library staff orders it from Amazon, and it's shipped directly to the library user's home. When finished, the item is returned to the library and becomes part of the collection. Because the program is driven by what library users want, the collection better reflects the needs of the local community.

**Collection Evaluation and Maintenance:**

Once materials have been added to the County Library's collection, they are managed through an assessment and evaluation process to ensure that ongoing collection priorities are met; that collections remain up to date, balanced, and attractive; and that space limitations are minimized. This process identifies items for replacement, retention or de-selection. Library staff utilize professional judgment and expertise in deciding which materials to retain, replace, repair or de-select.

De-selection and Weeding (removing items from the collection) is an integral part of collection development. The County Library will retain those materials that continue to have enduring or permanent significance to its mission and overall collection goals.

Along with the same criteria used to select new materials, general criteria for retaining, replacing, repairing or de-selecting include:

- Availability of item in alternative formats
- Feasibility, cost of repair
- Historical significance, interest, or value
- Physical condition
- Relative usefulness of item

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- Space considerations
- Superseded, inaccurate, or out-of-date content
- Usage

In most cases, Library staff will offer items de-selected will be weeded from the collection to authorized Friends of the Library groups to be sold to the public, with revenues accruing to the Friends to benefit the library. Library staff may also offer weeded items to the following groups:

- Local governments and agencies, including cities and school districts
- State institutions
- Non-profit organizations
- Recycling centers

Weeded items not taken by other governmental or non-profit agencies will be discarded or repurposed by the library staff with the approval of the County Librarian.

**Gifts and Donations:**

Imperial County Free Library accepts gifts for the County Library's collection that fall within needed subject categories, as determined by collection development librarians and library staff. Donated materials must meet the same selection criteria as purchased materials and are subject to the following limitations:

- The County Library retains unconditional ownership of donated materials. Exceptions are made on occasion at the County Librarian's discretion for special collections which are loaned to the County Library.
- The County Library makes the final decision on the use, distribution or other disposition of the items.
- The County Library reserves the right to decide the conditions of display, housing and access to the materials.
- Digital materials must be in a format that is compatible with the library's current platforms.
- Digital submissions must include signed waiver to donor's right to distribute the material.
- If digital material is selected for addition to our collection they will be considered "always available" with unlimited, concurrent use.

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- Donated materials should be no more than three years old and in excellent condition.

The County Library may not include all donated material in the collection. Any donated material not used in the collection may be given to Friends of the Library groups to be sold and resulting revenues are used to support library programs, collections, and services. Library staff will provide the donor, upon request, with a statement of the number of materials and type of material donated for tax purposes. Library staff will not assign value to donations for tax purposes.

**Distribution of religious and political material in the library:**

The Imperial County Free Library will not distribute to the public unsolicited literature of religious or political content. Pamphlets and current issues of religious periodicals may be accepted as gifts in order that information on the beliefs and teachings of a wide range of faiths and sects may be readily available to the public and be cataloged in an area designated by library personnel. Such gifts should not be displayed in commercial cases provided by donors. Gifts of religious or political materials that are regarded as ephemeral may be shelved together in a magazine or pamphlet file labeled "Free to the Public" Only current issues of such materials will be retained.

**Intellectual Freedom and the Freedom to Read:**

The Imperial County Free Library is committed to the principle that the constitutionally protected freedoms of speech and press are enjoyed by all. To this end, the County Library strives to offer a collection that represents the needs of our diverse community. Inclusion of an item in the collection does not mean that the County Library endorses any theory or statement contained in those materials and resources.

In support of the American Library Association's [Library Bill of Rights](#) and [Freedom to Read Statement](#), the Imperial County Free Library affirms the right of the public to receive access to a range of social, political, aesthetic, moral, and other ideas and experiences , and upholds the right of any individual to secure information, even if the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to others. Library materials should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people, and should present diverse points of view in the collection as a whole.

While every library user may not agree with the viewpoints offered in some library material, the County Library has a responsibility to provide a balanced collection with access to material reflecting diverse ideas through which any side of a question, cause, or movement may be explored, provided that the material meets the outlined selection criteria.

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The balanced nature of the collection is reflected in the diversity of materials, not in equality of numbers. Library users are free to choose what they like from the collection, to reject what they don't like, but not to restrict the freedom of others to choose. Imperial County Free Library supports the freedom of information and an individual's right to read, listen to, or view materials of their choosing, for both educational and recreational purposes without restriction, as outlined in the following documents (see appendices):

- AB1825 California Freedom to Read Act:  
[https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202320240AB1825](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB1825)
- American Library Association Freedom to Read Statement:  
<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>
- American Library Association Freedom to View Statement:  
<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomviewstatement>
- American Library Association Library Bill of Rights:  
<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>
- American Library Association Intellectual Freedom:  
<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom>

**Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials:**

Imperial County Free Library welcomes feedback from County residents about library resources and residents have the right to express their concerns about library materials. The Request for Review of Library Material process is the means by which those concerns can be addressed.

Imperial County residents who have a concern about library material may bring that concern to their local community library staff. If the concern cannot be fully resolved through that conversation, the customer can collect a Request for Reconsideration form at any Imperial County Free Library Branch location or Imperial County Free Library webpage. Once the library user returns the completed form, a reevaluation of the material is completed by County Library staff. Library users who provide their contact information on the form will receive a formal response as to the outcome of that reevaluation from the County Librarian's office.

Items remain in circulation during the reevaluation process.

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**REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION**

Please complete this form and submit to [imperialcountylibrary@co.imperial.ca.us](mailto:imperialcountylibrary@co.imperial.ca.us)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

What Library branch is this request regarding?  Calipatria  Heber  Holtville  Salton City

Date of occurrence? \_\_\_\_\_

What type of material or service are you commenting on?  Book  DVD  Magazine

Music CD  Display/Exhibit  Library Program  Newspaper  Audiobook  Web Resource

Other (brief description): \_\_\_\_\_

If commenting on an item, what is the title and author/performer/producer? \_\_\_\_\_

If commenting on an exhibit/display/program what is the title and date encountered? \_\_\_\_\_

How did this this title/display/event/exhibit/program come to your attention? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe in detail what it is that you find objectionable? Please be specific; cite pages, excerpts, lyrics, scenes, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

Did you read or listen to the entire work, stay for the entire program, view the entire display? If not, which selection or part did you read or view? \_\_\_\_\_

How did this come to your attention? \_\_\_\_\_

*The submission of your comments are appreciated.*

*A member of our Administrative Staff will contact you regarding your concerns.*

**Note: Please use the back of this page for additional comments if necessary.**

## Assembly Bill No. 1825

### CHAPTER 941

An act to add Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 19800) to Part 11 of Division 1 of Title 1 of the Education Code, relating to libraries.

[Approved by Governor September 29, 2024. Filed with  
Secretary of State September 29, 2024.]

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1825, Muratsuchi. California Freedom to Read Act.

Existing law establishes a public library system, including school libraries, unified school district and union high school district public libraries, municipal libraries, county free libraries, the California State Library, and library districts. Under existing law, the Legislature declares that the public library is, among other things, a source of information and inspiration to persons of all ages, cultural backgrounds, and economic statuses.

This bill would require every public library jurisdiction, as defined, that directly receives any state funding to establish, adopt, and maintain a written and publicly accessible collection development policy for its libraries by January 1, 2026, as specified. The bill would require the collection development policy to, among other things, (1) guide the selection and deselection of library materials, as defined, and (2) establish a process for community members to share their concerns regarding library materials and request materials be reconsidered for inclusion in the library's collection.

The bill would require the adopted policy to be sent to the State Librarian, and would authorize the State Librarian or their designee to provide technical assistance to public libraries in developing their collection development policy.

The bill would prohibit the governing board or body of a public library, or any body or commission designated to review the procurement, retention, or circulation of, or access to, library materials, from (1) proscribing the circulation or procurement of, or access to, library materials in a public library because of the topic addressed by the library materials or because of the views, ideas, or opinions contained in materials or (2) creating policies or procedures that limit or restrict access to library materials offered by the public library, except as provided. The bill would also prohibit library materials in a public library from being excluded, and access to library materials from being limited, solely on the bases of (1) specified protected characteristics of a subject of the library materials, an author of the materials, the sources of the library materials, or the perceived or intended audience for the library materials, (2) that the materials contain inclusive and diverse perspectives, or (3) that the materials may include sexual content, except as provided. The bill would provide that a person's right to use a public

library and its resources shall not be denied or abridged solely because of personal characteristics, age, background, or views.

The bill would prohibit a librarian, library media specialist, other employee, or contractor at a public library from being subject to termination, demotion, discipline, or retaliation for (1) refusing to remove a library material before it has been reviewed in accordance with the public library's process for reconsideration of library materials or (2) making displays, acquisitions, or programming decisions that the employee believes, in good faith, are in accordance with the bill's provisions.

The bill would provide that these provisions apply to a public library, as defined, including any public library operated on a contractual basis, or operated by a city, including a general law or charter city, county, special district, or joint powers authority, except that these provisions do not apply to any school library, as defined, or any library operated by the governing board of a school district, a county board of education, or the governing body of a charter school. To the extent these provisions impose additional duties on public libraries, the bill would create a state-mandated local program.

The bill would include findings that changes proposed by this bill address a matter of statewide concern rather than a municipal affair and, therefore, apply to all cities, including charter cities.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to the statutory provisions noted above.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 19800) is added to Part 11 of Division 1 of Title 1 of the Education Code, to read:

CHAPTER 10. CALIFORNIA FREEDOM TO READ ACT

19800. This chapter shall be known, and may be cited, as the California Freedom to Read Act.

19801. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) Libraries are essential for information, education, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves.

(b) Libraries provide access to books that offer teachable moments for readers of all ages and expand our understanding of people with different backgrounds, ideas, and beliefs.

(c) A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged solely because of personal characteristics, age, background, or views.

(d) Removing and banning books from public libraries are dangerous acts of government censorship and erode our country's commitment to freedom of expression and the right to receive information.

(e) Librarians are professionals trained to not impose their own thoughts and opinions on which ideas are right, but to make knowledge and ideas available so that people have the freedom to choose what to read.

(f) Librarians and library staff receive extensive professional training to develop and curate collections to meet the broad and diverse interests of their communities, which include, but are not limited to, literary value and developmental appropriateness of material.

19802. (a) (1) Every public library jurisdiction that directly receives any state funding, including, but not limited to, state funding pursuant to this part, shall establish, adopt, and maintain a written and publicly accessible collection development policy for its public libraries by January 1, 2026, and shall submit that collection development policy to the State Librarian. The State Librarian or their designee may provide technical assistance to public libraries in developing their collection development policy. The collection development policy, at a minimum, shall do all of the following:

(A) Establish a process for community members to share their concerns regarding library materials and to request that library materials be reconsidered for inclusion in the library's collection.

(B) Guide the selection and deselection of library materials.

(C) Acknowledge that the public library's collection meets the broad and diverse interests of the community and respect both the library's autonomy and their specific community needs.

(D) Establish that the public library serves as a center for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas.

(E) Acknowledge that library materials should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people, and should present diverse points of view in the collection as a whole.

(F) Acknowledge the right of the public to receive access to a range of social, political, aesthetic, moral, and other ideas and experiences.

(2) A librarian, library media specialist, other employee, or contractor at a public library shall not be subject to termination, demotion, discipline, or retaliation for either of the following:

(A) Refusing to remove a library material before it has been reviewed in accordance with the public library's process for the reconsideration of library materials established pursuant to subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1).

(B) Making displays, acquisitions, or programming decisions that the employee or contractor believes, in good faith, are in accordance with the requirements of this section.

(b) (1) The governing board or body of a public library, or any body or commission designated to review the procurement, retention, or circulation of, or access to, library materials, shall not proscribe or prohibit the circulation or procurement of, or access to, any library materials in a public library because of the topic addressed by the materials or because of the views, ideas, or opinions contained in those materials.

(2) (A) Library materials in public libraries shall not be excluded, and access to library materials shall not be limited, solely on the bases of any of the following:

(i) The race, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, political affiliation, or any other characteristic listed in subdivision (a) of Section 12940 of the Government Code, or the socioeconomic status of a subject of the library materials, an author of the library materials, the source of the library materials, or the perceived or intended audience for the library materials.

(ii) The library materials contain inclusive and diverse perspectives.

(iii) The library materials may include sexual content, unless that content qualifies as obscene under United States Supreme Court precedent.

(B) This paragraph does not apply to library materials excluded, or for which access is limited, pursuant to a library maintenance and deaccession policy.

(3) The governing board or body of a public library, or any body or commission designated to review the procurement, retention, or circulation of, or access to, library materials, shall not create policies or procedures that limit or restrict access to library materials offered by the public library unless the policies or procedures are adopted to preserve the safety or security of the library materials, are time, place, and manner restrictions not based on the content of materials, or are programs that provide for the effective management of the library and its resources to preserve access for all library users.

(c) A person's right to use a public library and its resources shall not be denied or abridged solely because of personal characteristics, age, background, or views.

(d) All people, regardless of personal characteristics, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in the materials they borrow from libraries.

(e) This section applies to a public library, as defined in Section 18015, including any public library operated on a contractual basis, or by a city, including a general law or charter city, county, special district, or joint powers authority, except that it does not apply to any school library, as defined in Section 18710, or any library operated by the governing board of a school district, a county board of education, or the governing body of a charter school.

(f) For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Library materials" includes, but is not limited to, books, periodicals and serials, audio materials, audiovisual materials, instructional materials, maps, databases, government documents, records, photographs, and all other similar materials, whether in tangible or electronic form. "Library materials" does not include hardware, tools, instruments, computers, appliances, or other items that are not for the primary purpose of conveying ideas or information.

(2) "Public library jurisdiction" means a county, city and county, city, or any district that is authorized by law to provide public library services and that operates a public library described in subdivision (e).

SEC. 2. The Legislature finds and declares that ensuring public libraries are free of censorship is a matter of statewide concern and is not a municipal affair as that term is used in Section 5 of Article XI of the California Constitution. Therefore, Section 1 of this act adding Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 19800) to Part 11 of Division 1 of Title 1 of the Education Code applies to all cities, including charter cities.

SEC. 3. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

**Library funding is under threat.** Find out how you can show up for libraries: [ala.org/showup](https://ala.org/showup).



# The Freedom to Read Statement

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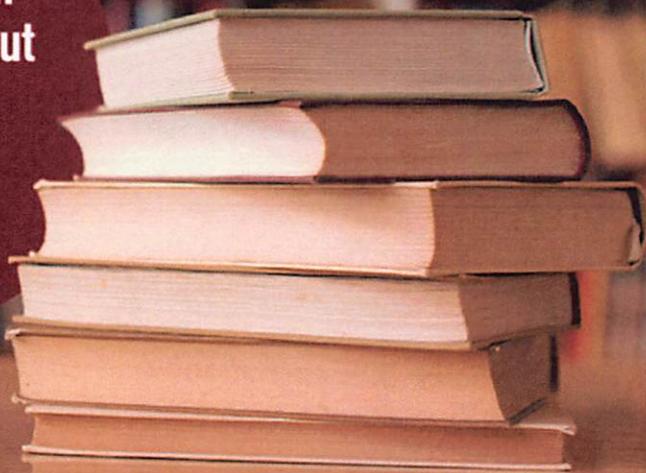


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*On June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1953 we said that*  
**we trust the people of this nation  
 to make their own decisions about  
 what they read and believe.**

*70 Years later, we still trust  
 them to make their own  
 decisions.*



The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship; the pressure cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even

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of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

- 1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is r

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systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

- 2. Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

- 3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

- 4. There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have c  
young to meet the diversity of experiences in life

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as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is not a "bad" idea is a good one.*

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The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

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This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

*A Joint Statement by:*

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# Library Bill of Rights

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The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the

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Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. 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.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

Although the Articles of the *Library Bill of Rights* are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as [Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights](#).

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