

Carroll County Public Library
Collection Development Policy

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I. General Statement of Philosophy

Purpose

The purpose of the Carroll County Public Library Collection Development Policy is to guide librarians and to inform the public about the principles of collection development.

The Collection Development Policy supports the mission of the Carroll County Public Library which is:

“to provide adults and children of Carroll County with information and resources that support lifelong learning and lifelong enjoyment.” Current CCPL Strategic Plan.

Carroll County Public Library’s service commitment is to the people within its’ service area including people of every age, education, background, personal philosophy, religious belief, occupation, economic level, ethnic origin and human condition.

A policy cannot replace the judgment of librarians, but stating goals and indicating boundaries will assist them in choosing from a vast array of available materials.

Definitions

The word “materials” is used for all forms of media and has the widest possible inclusion. Examples could include: books, (hardbound and paperback), pamphlets, maps, magazines and journals, newspapers, manuscripts, photographs, films, videotapes, compact discs, sound recordings, audio books, electronic databases, videogames, and ebooks.

“Selection” refers to the decision that must be made to add a given item to the collection. It does not refer to assisting a library user.

“Collection Development” refers to an ongoing process of assessing the materials available for purchase or licensing, and in making the decisions, first, on their inclusion, and, second, on their retention if they are added.

Objectives

The objective of collection development is to provide quality library service by making available a well-selected, well-maintained collection. The collection will include library materials in adequate numbers and in a variety of formats, based on patterns of use and anticipated demand.

II. Responsibility for Materials Selection

1. In the Carroll County Public Library all titles new to the collection are selected by staff in the Materials Management Department. They are aided by advisory committees of librarians from branches who channel information between the library users and selectors. Input is also sought from other Headquarters staff with knowledge of and experience in using technology for sources of information.
2. Final responsibility for materials selection lies with the Board of Library Trustees. However, the Board delegates to the Director authority to interpret and guide the application of the policy in making day-to-day selections. The Director will authorize other staff to assist in applying this policy. Unusual problems will be referred to the Director and in exceptional cases he/she will present comprehensive information to the Board.

III. Criteria for Selection

A. Overview:

1. Library staff employ professional judgment and expertise in making collection development decisions, including decisions about choosing titles, and identifying quantities for purchase. Anticipated demand, community interests, strengths and weaknesses of the existing collections, system-wide availability, physical space limitations, and level of funding for materials are all factors taken into consideration.
2. Materials are acquired in multiple formats when appropriate, including print, audiovisual, and digital resources. Highest selection priority is given to those materials in all formats having the broadest appeal. Multiple copies of materials are purchased in response to user demand as evidenced by the number of holds, anticipated popularity, repeated customer requests and monitoring of the collection. The number of copies acquired of a particular title is determined by user demand and available funds.
3. Library staff use their training, subject knowledge and the selection criteria to make selections for the Library's collection. The following criteria are used to evaluate materials for possible inclusion into the collection. An item need not meet all of these criteria to be selected.

B. Criteria

- 1) Relevance to community needs and interests and also to Library's mission and service roles
- 2) Attention of critics, reviewers and the public
- 3) Local or national significance
- 4) Professional reviews or recommendations from subject specialists
- 5) Reputation and qualifications of the author, artist, publisher or producer and accuracy of content
- 6) Artistic merit, literary value , or award nominees and recipients
- 7) Permanence or timeliness of subject or title
- 8) Suitability of format for library shelving and circulation including, type of binding, paper quality, readability of type, packaging, specialized equipment needs and technical quality of nonprint and electronic media
- 9) Relationship to other resources in the community
- 10) Relationship to other materials in the existing collection
- 11) Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
- 12) Availability of information in other resources held by the library
- 13) Legal or licensing issues
- 14) Representation of controversial or diverse points of view
- 15) Support of library programs and initiatives
- 16) Price, availability and budgetary constraints

C. Selection Sources

Sources for selection decisions encompass, but are not limited to, published reviews from standard review sources, publisher/vendor catalogs and advertisements, professional and trade bibliographies, and customer requests and recommendations. The Library strongly encourages customer input, and all customer requests and recommendations are subject to the selection criteria outlined above. Please refer to our Customer Purchase Request document for further information regarding customer requests and recommendations. This document can be found by searching the CCPL Library website.

D. Consortia Considerations

Carroll County Public Library seeks out opportunities to purchase materials as part of various state and local consortia. This allows us to use the library materials budget in a more fiscally responsible way. However, because of that, we follow the selection guidelines established by the consortia. There may be times when these guidelines will differ from our own Collection Development Policy. One example of this is our participation in a consortium with the surrounding colleges (McDaniel and Carroll Community College). Because of our shared library catalog arrangements, items may appear in the library catalog which are not actually owned by CCPL.

E. Author Requests to Add an Item to the Collection

Carroll County Public Library is happy to represent local or self-published authors whose work fits within our collection development guidelines. Please refer to this list of standard procedures for authors who would like to have their titles added to our collection. This document can be found by searching the CCPL Library website.

F. Materials Not Selected by CCPL Staff

The Library provides in-library Internet access to customers, but does not select the content that is available through this access. The Library follows the guidelines enacted by Congress under the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) to protect children during their use of Internet resources. To comply with these guidelines, the Library uses filtering software on all in-library Internet access stations to the extent necessary to block access to sites which may violate obscenity statutes or are deemed harmful to children under the age of 17, with the understanding that the filter will be removed for any adult customer who requests unfiltered access. Internet access stations located in children's areas of library branches use broader filters that may not be bypassed. Please see our Internet Acceptable Use Policy for further explanation of our filter and Internet access within the Library.

IV. Use of Library Materials

1. The library recognizes that many materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some library user. Selection will not be made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to collection building and to serving the interests of Carroll countians.
2. In keeping with the tradition of access to ideas through public libraries, Internet access is available through Library-offered remote access subscriptions and in libraries at the public catalog stations. Internet is not governed by any entity, so there are not limits or checks on the kinds of information therein. Only a user can decide on the accuracy, completeness and currency of the contents.
3. Selection of materials in any format and access to the Internet will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may inadvertently come into the possession of or seen by children.
4. Filtering software will be used on all in-library Internet access stations to the extent necessary to block access to sites which may violate obscenity statutes, with the understanding that immediately upon request from an adult, the filter will be removed from the computer to be used by that adult. Internet access stations in children's areas of library branches will use broader filters.
5. Selection designates neither Library approval nor Library disapproval of the contents. No item will be sequestered except for the express purpose of protecting it from injury or theft.
6. The use of rare and scarce items of great value may be controlled to the extent required to preserve them from harm, but no further.

V. Guidelines for Selection

A. General Guidelines

1. The Library recognizes the purposes and resources of other libraries in the metropolitan Baltimore area and shall not needlessly duplicate functions and materials. Through cooperative agreements with the Division of Library Development and Services, State Department of Education, and neighboring public and academic libraries, the resources of these libraries may be available to Carroll County readers.
2. Because the Library endorses the practice of a shared collection, selection of materials will be made with due regard to the collective interests of the Carroll County community.
3. The Library recognizes that some materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some library user. Selection will not be made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to collection building and to serving the interests of Carroll County residents.
4. Selection of materials deemed appropriate for the CCPL collection will not be inhibited by the possibility that the materials may inadvertently come into the possession of or seen by children.
5. Selection of materials designates neither Library approval nor Library disapproval. No item selected for the collection will be sequestered except for the express purpose of protecting it from damage or theft.

B. Guidelines for Selection According to Type of Reader

1. Because the Library serves a public which includes a wide range of ages, educational backgrounds, and reading abilities, it will seek to select materials of varying complexity.
2. The Library is particularly aware of the needs of preschool children who are not served in a formal way for their collection interests except by the public library. Meeting their needs constitutes an educational preparation before their years in school.

C. Guidelines for Selection According to Form or Nature of Material

1. The Library acknowledges the purposes of educational programs for all students of all ages provided by the educational institutions in the area. Textbooks and curriculum related materials for these programs are provided where the materials also serve the general public as an introduction to the subject or where they provide information not otherwise available.
2. Retellings of the anonymous folk stories and retold versions of epic tales which were written in the ancient forms of English or foreign languages are bought when they adhere to the style and content of the originals and evoke the period in which they were created.
3. Abridgements are purchased in audio format only when other formats are unavailable for purchase.
4. The illustrations in a picture book form an integral part of determining the book's acceptability.

D. Guidelines for Selection According to Subject

1. Legal and medical works will be acquired only to the extent that they are useful to the layperson.
2. The Library acknowledges a particular interest in local and state history; therefore it will seek to acquire state and county public documents, and it will take a broad view of works by and about Maryland authors as well as general works relating to the state of Maryland. However, the Library is not under any obligation to add to its collections everything about Maryland or everything produced by authors, printers or publishers with Maryland connections.
3. The Library collection contains materials on different peoples and faiths. Bible stories, lives of saints, biographies of religious figures as well as materials of general spiritual content and those on diverse customs and traditions must meet the general standards of selection.
4. The Library provides information on sex designed for all age levels of readers. Materials for varying levels of education and differing social and religious customs are provided using the guidelines for selection. The Library carefully examines children's materials that deal with this subject, selecting those that present the information with clarity and scientific accuracy.
5. Principles governing the selection of materials as stated in this collection development policy are also applicable to the selection of children's materials with additional consideration given to appropriate content and vocabulary for the intended reader.

E. MAGAZINE AND NEWSPAPER SELECTION PROCEDURES

1. The Library maintains a representative collection of magazines and newspapers intended to provide current information on a variety of popular, recreational, cultural, vocational and practical topics. Included in this collection are financial and business publications as well as titles dealing with health issues, parenting, news, consumer product evaluations, hobbies and crafts, and arts and entertainment. We aim to serve patrons with diverse viewpoints and different educational levels.
2. The main criteria used to determine whether a magazine/newspaper will be added and maintained include the following:
 - a) The potential for use of the publication.
 - b) Past circulation history.
 - c) An examination of a sample copy.
 - d) Professional reviews of the publication.
 - e) Requests from library customers, which are kept on file. At renewal time each title suggested is considered for addition to the collection.
 - f) The availability of the publication at other area libraries (Journals that are highly technical or scholarly generally are not included in the collection.)
 - g) Coverage of the publication's subject area in the library's existing collection.
 - h) Core collection lists published in professional journals.
 - i) Available shelf space.
 - j) Funding and vendors. Subscriptions are a yearly expense, and there are many more magazines than funds available for subscriptions.
3. The following additional factors are considered in the development and maintenance of the magazine collection:
 - Subscriptions are reviewed annually in *the late summer* to assess interest and activity. Particular focus is placed on customer recommendations and titles that are popular in retail outlets. The library purchases most periodicals through vendor contracts. If our vendors do not offer a periodical, it is less likely that CCPL will purchase that periodical.
 - The relationship to existing collections & patterns of use and anticipated demand. System reports give selectors information about circulation and in-branch use of periodical materials. Assessment of the need for materials is based, in part, on both customer interest and use in every subject area.
4. Retention of back issues is decided by each branch based on demand, available space and full-text electronic access.

VI. Gifts and Memorials

1. The Library accepts gifts of materials, but reserves the right to evaluate and dispose of them in accordance with the criteria applied to purchased materials. Gifts which do not accord with the Library's objectives and policies will be refused.
2. Once a gift is accepted by CCPL, it becomes the property of CCPL unconditionally. Gift materials not added to the collection may be sold by the library in branch booksales or through third party vendors. A receipt for the gift materials will be given to the donor upon request, however, CCPL staff are not permitted to place a value on these gift materials.
3. A memorial is created when money or material is donated to add books or other materials to the collection, usually in memory or honor of an individual or group. CCPL welcomes suggestions for purchases, but reserves the right to make the final decision regarding all materials. A memorial may be placed in the library collection for reference or circulating use and a bookplate will be added to these materials. Memorial materials are subject to the same policies and procedures for weeding as all other purchased materials.
4. Gifts of magazine subscriptions are not accepted. Magazines are a yearly expense and if a subscription is given by a customer for one year only, this places a burden on the library's magazine budget to continue the purchase of the magazine when customers have come to expect it to be part of the magazine collection.

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VII. Maintaining the Collection

1. Selection is only one aspect of collection development. Rigorous attention must be given to the systematic assessment of the collection to be sure that the collection is still serving the needs of the community. The Collection Development Policy serves as a guide for weeding and maintaining the collection as well as for the selection of materials.
2. Weeding the library collection is as much a routine as the acquisition of new books. The purpose of discarding materials from the collection is to maintain an accurate and up-to-date collection for library customers. Materials that are inaccurate, outdated, unused, or in poor condition detract from the usefulness and aesthetic appeal of the collection. These materials take up shelf space that could be occupied by needed and requested materials.
3. Weeding the collection is an ongoing process and is the responsibility of the branch librarians with guidance from the Materials Management Department. The goal of the Carroll County Public Library is that each section of the collection is to be weeded on a regular basis to keep the collection accurate. Special attention is paid to those areas of the collection that can become rapidly outdated.
4. Items that are weeded from the collection include ones that are: misleading or factually inaccurate; damaged, soiled or worn; outdated or superseded by a new edition or newer title on the same subject; irrelevant to the needs and interests of the community or contain information that may be obtained more easily elsewhere. Materials that have not circulated in a chosen time period, duplicate titles no longer needed, or damaged materials are also considered for discarding.
5. Items in damaged or outdated condition will be recycled whenever possible or discarded. Items in good condition may be sold by the library in branch book sales, through a third party vendor, or donated to appropriate local organizations. Funds raised through book sales go back to the CCPL budget to support ongoing services.
6. Materials are not removed from the collection for the sole purpose of selling them.

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VIII. Reconsideration of Library Material

A. Support of the Right to Read

1. The Library does not operate in a vacuum, but in a community representing all shades of opinion. It is the very essence of a democracy that its people have the right of free inquiry and the equally important right of forming their own opinions. Therefore, the Library should stand firm in the face of any segment of the community which might seek to impress its special viewpoint through censorship. It should not withdraw a book at the request of any individual or group since to do so would be to limit the rights of other individuals and groups and to place the Library's selection policy in the hands of shifting public opinion.
2. If customers wish to discover the worth of certain publications for themselves, they should be given the opportunity to do so. Furthermore, history shows that many books that have been most controversial or objectionable to some persons or groups have, in due course, been recognized to be among those books which most, rather than least, belong in public libraries. If an idea is truly dangerous or evil, the best protection against it is a public which has been exposed to it and has rejected it; the worst protection is a public which has been shielded from exposure to it by official or self-appointed guardians.
3. Therefore, in the event that anyone in or out of the community should object to the Library's acquisition or retention of a certain publication on moral, political, religious, or philosophical grounds, the objection should be recognized as an indication that the publication in question may well be of more than routine interest and may be likely to be requested by members of the community who wish to judge its merits and demerits for themselves.

B. Reconsideration Procedures

1. Once an item has been accepted as qualifying under the selection criteria, it will not be removed unless it can be shown to be in violation of the criteria.
2. A procedure has been established whereby patrons may request reconsideration of material in the collection. Upon receipt of the completed and signed form: "Collection Complaint Form," Materials Management Department staff will review the material and send a written reply to the customer.

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IX. Challenged Materials

1. Overview:

- a) The library believes in freedom of information for all and does not practice censorship. The library holds censorship to be a purely individual matter and so asserts that while anyone is free to reject any materials of which he/she does not approve, he/she may not exercise censorship to restrict the freedom of others.
- b) The library makes every attempt to place materials within age appropriate collections, and maintains separate collections for children, young adults and adults. However, responsibility for materials selected and read by children and young adults rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection decisions are not influenced by the possibility that materials may be accessible to minors. No items are sequestered except to protect them from damage or theft.
- c) Carroll County Public Library seeks out opportunities to purchase materials as part of various state and local consortia. This allows us to use the library materials budget in a more fiscally responsible way. However, because of that, we follow the selection guidelines established by the consortia. There may be times when these guidelines will differ from our own Collection Development Policy. One example of this is our participation in a consortium with the surrounding colleges (McDaniel and Carroll Community College). Because of our shared library catalog arrangements, items may appear in the library catalog which are not actually owned by CCPL.
- d) The Board of Trustees recognizes that the collection of diverse materials may result in some complaints or requests for reconsideration. Procedures have been developed to assure that complaints are handled in an attentive and consistent manner.

An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association declares as a matter of firm principle that it is the responsibility of every library to have a clearly defined materials selection policy in written form which reflects the Library Bill of Rights, and which is approved by the appropriate governing authority.

Challenged materials which meet the criteria for selection in the materials selection policy of the library should not be removed under any legal or extra-legal pressure. The Library Bill of Rights states in Article I that "Materials should not be excluded because of their origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation," and in Article II, that "Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval." Freedom of expression is protected by the Constitution of the United States, but constitutionally protected expression is often separated from unprotected expression only by a dim and uncertain line. The Constitution requires a procedure designed to focus searchingly on challenged expression before it can be suppressed. An adversary hearing is a part of this procedure.

Therefore, any attempt, be it legal or extra-legal, to regulate or suppress materials in libraries must be closely scrutinized to the end that protected expression is not abridged.

Adopted June 25, 1971; amended July 1, 1981; amended January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council.
[ISBN 8389-6083-9]

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X. Endorsements of National and State Policies (see appendices)

The Carroll County Public Library Board of Trustees supports the following statements from the Maryland State Board of Education, the American Library Association, and the Educational Film Library Association:

State Bylaw, Public Libraries Book Selection Policy – Maryland State Board of Education

Library Bill of Rights – American Library Association

Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights

1. Statement on Labeling
2. Evaluating Library Collections
3. Diversity in Collection Development
4. Expurgation of Library Materials
5. Challenged Materials
6. Library Initiated Programs as a Resource

Freedom to Read Statement – American Library Association

Freedom to View – Educational Film Library Association

XI. Revision of Policy

This policy will be revised as times and circumstances require.

Appendices

State Bylaw, Public Libraries Book Selection Policy – Maryland State Board of Education

Library Bill of Rights – American Library Association

Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights

1. Statement on Labeling
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Freedom to Read Statement – American Library Association

Freedom to View – Educational Film Library Association

Public Libraries Selection Policy

WHEREAS, The freedom to read is essential to our democracy; and

WHEREAS, Public libraries have a responsibility to make available to the public books and other material offering the widest diversity of knowledge and ideas, views and expressions, so that citizens may choose freely from among a broad range of conflicting ideas; and

WHEREAS, It is in the public interest for libraries to reaffirm this principle in policies and procedures for the selection of library materials and for dealing with complaints and requests for the removal of material by individuals or groups; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education endorses the Freedom to Read principle and requires boards of library trustees of each public library system to adopt policies that will affirm and guide the effective implementation of this principle and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Board directs the Assistant State Superintendent for Libraries to provide assistance to libraries and to report the result to the Board by June, 1982.

Adopted by the Maryland State Board of Education.
June 24, 1981

Library Bill of Rights

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 community the library serves. 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.

Adopted June 19, 1939.

Amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; and January 23, 1980;
inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996, by the ALA Council.

Statement on Labeling

An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Labeling is the practice of describing or designating materials by affixing a prejudicial label and/or segregating them by a prejudicial system. The American Library Association opposes these means of predisposing people's attitudes toward library materials for the following reasons:

1. Labeling is an attempt to prejudice attitudes and as such, it is a censor's tool.
2. Some find it easy and even proper, according to their ethics, to establish criteria for judging publications as objectionable. However, injustice and ignorance rather than justice and enlightenment result from such practices, and the American Library Association opposes the establishment of such criteria.
3. Libraries do not advocate ideas found in their collections. The presence of books and other resources in a library does not indicate endorsement of their contents by the library.

A variety of private organizations promulgate rating systems and/or review materials as a means of advising either their members or the general public concerning their opinions of the contents and suitability or appropriate age for use of certain books, films, recordings, or other materials. For the library to adopt or enforce any of these private systems, to attach such ratings to library materials, to include them in bibliographic records, library catalogs, or other finding aids, or otherwise to endorse them would violate the Library Bill of Rights.

While some attempts have been made to adopt these systems into law, the constitutionality of such measures is extremely questionable. If such legislation is passed which applies within a library's jurisdiction, the library should seek competent legal advice concerning its applicability to library operations.

Publishers, industry groups, and distributors sometimes add ratings to material or include them as part of their packaging. Librarians should not endorse such practices. However, removing or obliterating such ratings--if placed there by or with permission of the copyright holder--could constitute expurgation, which is also unacceptable.

The American Library Association opposes efforts which aim at closing any path to knowledge. This statement, however, does not exclude the adoption of organizational schemes designed as directional aids or to facilitate access to materials.

Adopted July 13, 1951. Amended June 25, 1971; July 1, 1981; June 26, 1990, by the ALA Council.
[ISBN 8389-5226-7]

Diversity in Collection Development

An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Collection development should reflect the philosophy inherent in Article II of the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights: "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."

Library collections must represent the diversity of people and ideas in our society. There are many complex facets to any issue, and many contexts in which issues may be expressed, discussed, or interpreted. Librarians have an obligation to select and support access to content on all subjects that meet, as closely as possible, the needs, interests, and abilities of all persons in the community the library serves.

Librarians have a professional responsibility to be inclusive in collection development and in the provision of interlibrary loan. Access to all content legally obtainable should be assured to the user, and policies should not unjustly exclude content even if it is offensive to the librarian or the user. This includes content that reflect a diversity of issues, whether they be, for example, political, economic, religious, social, ethnic, or sexual. A balanced collection reflects a diversity of content, not an equality of numbers.

Collection development responsibilities include selecting content in different formats produced by independent, small and local producers as well as information resources from major producers and distributors. Content should represent the languages commonly used in the library's service community and should include formats that meet the needs of users with disabilities. Collection development and the selection of content should be done according to professional standards and established selection and review procedures. Failure to select resources merely because they may be potentially controversial is censorship, as is withdrawing resources for the same reason.

Over time, individuals, groups, and entities have sought to limit the diversity of library collections. They cite a variety of reasons that include prejudicial language and ideas, political content, economic theory, social philosophies, religious beliefs, sexual content and expression, and other potentially controversial topics. Librarians have a professional responsibility to be fair, just, and equitable and to give all library users equal protection in guarding against violation of the library patron's right to read, view, or listen to content protected by the First Amendment, no matter what the viewpoint of the author, creator, or selector. Librarians have an obligation to protect library collections from removal of content based on personal bias or prejudice.

Intellectual freedom, the essence of equitable library services, provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause, or movement may be explored. Librarians must not permit their personal beliefs to influence collection development decisions.

Adopted July 14, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended January 10, 1990; July 2, 2008; and July 1, 2014.

[ISBN 8389-6552-0]

Expurgation of Library Materials

An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Expurgating library materials is a violation of the Library Bill of Rights. Expurgation as defined by this interpretation includes any deletion, excision, alteration, editing, or obliteration of any part(s) of books or other library resources by the library, its agent, or its parent institution (if any). By such expurgation, the library is in effect denying access to the complete work and the entire spectrum of ideas that the work intended to express. Such action stands in violation of Articles 1, 2, and 3 of the Library Bill of Rights., which state that "Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation," that "Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval," and that "Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment."

The act of expurgation has serious implications. It involves a determination that it is necessary to restrict access to the complete work. This is censorship. When a work is expurgated, under the assumption that certain portions of that work would be harmful to minors, the situation is no less serious.

Expurgation of any books or other library resources imposes a restriction, without regard to the rights and desires of all library users, by limiting access to ideas and information.

Further, expurgation without written permission from the holder of the copyright on the material may violate the copyright provisions of the United States Code.

Adopted February 2, 1973; amended July 1, 1981; amended January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council.
[ISBN 8389-5419-7]

Challenged Materials

An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association declares as a matter of firm principle that it is the responsibility of every library to have a clearly defined materials selection policy in written form which reflects the Library Bill of Rights, and which is approved by the appropriate governing authority.

Challenged materials which meet the criteria for selection in the materials selection policy of the library should not be removed under any legal or extra-legal pressure. The Library Bill of Rights states in Article I that "Materials should not be excluded because of their origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation," and in Article II, that "Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval." Freedom of expression is protected by the Constitution of the United States, but constitutionally protected expression is often separated from unprotected expression only by a dim and uncertain line. The Constitution requires a procedure designed to focus searchingly on challenged expression before it can be suppressed. An adversary hearing is a part of this procedure.

Therefore, any attempt, be it legal or extra-legal, to regulate or suppress materials in libraries must be closely scrutinized to the end that protected expression is not abridged.

Adopted June 25, 1971; amended July 1, 1981; amended January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council.
[ISBN 8389-6083-9]

Library Initiated Programs as a Resource

An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Library initiated programs support the mission of the library by providing users with additional opportunities for information, education and recreation. Article 1 of the Library Bill of Rights states: "Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves."

Library initiated programs take advantage of library staff expertise, collections, services and facilities to increase access to information and information resources. Library initiated programs introduce users and potential users to the resources of the library and to the library's primary function as facilitator of information access. The library may participate in cooperative or joint programs with other agencies, organizations, institutions or individuals as part of its own effort to address information needs and to facilitate information access in the community the library serves.

Library initiated programs on site and in other locations include, but are not limited to, speeches, community forums, discussion groups, demonstrations, displays, and live or media presentations.

Libraries serving multilingual or multicultural communities make efforts to accommodate the information needs of those for whom English is a second language. Library initiated programs across language and cultural barriers introduce otherwise unserved populations to the resources of the library and provide access to information.

Library initiated programs "should not be proscribed or removed (or canceled) because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval" of the contents of the program or the views expressed by the participants, as stated in Article 2 of the Library Bill of Rights. Library sponsorship of a program does not constitute an endorsement of the content of the program or the views expressed by the participants, any more than the purchase of material for the library collection constitutes an endorsement of the contents of the material or the views of its creator.

Library initiated programs are a library resource, and as such, are developed in accordance with written guidelines, as approved and adopted by the library's policy-making body. These guidelines include an endorsement of the Library Bill of Rights and set forth the library's commitment to free and open access to information and ideas for all users.

Library staff select topics, speakers and resource materials for library initiated programs based on the interests and information needs of the community. Topics, speakers and resource materials are not excluded from library initiated programs because of possible controversy. Concerns, questions or complaints about library initiated programs are handled according to the same written policy and procedures which govern reconsiderations of other library resources.

Library initiated programs are offered free of charge and are open to all. Article 5 of the Library Bill of Rights states: "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views."

The "right to use a library" encompasses all of the resources the library offers, including the right to attend library initiated programs. Libraries do not deny or abridge access to library resources, including library initiated programs, based on an individual's economic background and ability to pay.

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The Freedom to Read

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 books from sale, to censor textbooks, to label "controversial" books, 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 avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens devoted to the use of books and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating them, is to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

We are deeply concerned about these attempts at suppression. Most such attempts rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary citizen, by exercising critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow-citizens.

We trust Americans to recognize propaganda, and to reject it. We do not believe they need the help of censors to assist them in this task. 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.

We are aware, of course, that books are not alone in being subjected to efforts at suppression. We are aware that these efforts are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, films, radio and television. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of uneasy change and pervading fear. Especially when so many of our apprehensions are directed against an ideology, the expression of a dissident idea becomes a thing feared in itself, and we tend to move against it as against a hostile deed, with suppression.

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 stress.

Now as always in our history, books are among our greatest instruments of freedom. They are almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. They are the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. They are essential to the extended discussion which 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 towards 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:

It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those which are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.

Creative thought by definition is new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept which 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.

Publishers, librarians and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation contained in the books 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 books 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.

It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to determine the acceptability of a book on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.

A book should be judged as a book. 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 which draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

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 literature 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 a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, 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 taste differs, and taste cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised which will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any book the prejudgment of a label characterizing the book or 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 the citizen. 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.

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.

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.

It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give the 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 a good one, the answer to a bad idea is a good one.

The freedom to read is of little consequence when expended on the trivial; it is frustrated 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 their freedom and integrity, and the enlargement of their service to society, requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all citizens 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 books. We do so because we believe that they are good, 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.

This statement was originally issued in May 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; revised January 28, 1972, January 16, 1991, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee.

A Joint Statement by: American
Library Association Association of
American Publishers

Subsequently Endorsed by:
American Booksellers Association
American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression
American Civil Liberties Union
American Federation of Teachers AFL-CIO
Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith
Association of American University Presses
Children's Book Council Freedom to Read Foundation
International Reading Association
Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression
National Association of College Stores
National Council of Teachers of English
P.E.N. - American Center
People for the American Way
Periodical and Book Association of America
Sex Information and education Council of the U.S.
Society of Professional Journalists Women's National Book Association
WCA of the USA

The Freedom to View

The Freedom to View, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore, we affirm these principles:

1. It is in the public interest to provide the broadest possible access to films and other audiovisual materials because they have proven to be among the most effective means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. It is in the public interest to provide for our audiences films and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
3. It is our professional responsibility to resist the constraint of labeling or prejudging a film on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
4. It is our professional responsibility to contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Educational Film Library Association's Freedom to View Committee, and was adopted by the EFLA Board of Directors in February, 1979. It was endorsed by the American Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Committee and the ALA Council in June, 1979.

Libraries and educational institutions are encouraged to adopt this statement and to display it in their catalogs or libraries. The text of the statement may be reprinted freely; permission is granted to all educational institutions to use it.

Educational Film Library Association, 43 W 61st St., New York, NY 10023