



LEADING THE WAY
SINCE 1875

Intellectual Freedom Statement Against Censorship

The Connecticut Library Association (CLA) advocates and educates in defense of intellectual freedom – the rights of library users to read, speak freely, and have unrestricted access to information, as guaranteed by the First Amendment. We are committed to defending the constitutional rights of all individuals, of all ages, to use the resources and services of libraries. Recently, organized attacks have targeted library materials and programs by BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and Jewish authors that address race, racism, enslavement, history, sexuality, gender identity and expression, bigotry, and antisemitism. This is a callous systemic erasure to undermine and eliminate the diversity of thought and experiences that reflect the BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and Jewish communities. These assaults of intimidation threaten the livelihood and safety of authors, library workers, educators, and board members. CLA vehemently condemns these acts of censorship and intimidation.

We believe in the [Library Bill of Rights](#), [Freedom to Read Statement](#), and Article 19 of the [Universal Declarations of Human Rights](#). Intellectual freedom is a core value of the library profession, and a basic right in our democratic society.

There is no good censorship. Any effort to restrict free expression, or the free flow of information, aids discrimination, and oppression. Fighting oppression with censorship is self-defeating. Critical thinking and civil discourse from all points of view must be protected and encouraged in a democracy. Any attack on these tenets is an affront to the rights of all people and works against the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion for which all libraries strive. Attempts to suppress and censor denies the individual the freedom to exercise critical judgment and to make their own decision about what they read and believe. We believe in the free enterprise of ideas and expressions.

We reject the claim that removing, labeling, or relocating a title will somehow shield children from the ideas contained within, especially in our connected digital world. We further reject the notion that anyone can perform the work we do without significant engagement with the professional ethics and expertise of librarianship. Libraries are safe places for children to encounter ideas in an environment that nurtures curiosity. Occasionally these encounters will include ideas that might be challenging, but we support the right of readers to be challenged, to learn, and to grow. Librarians and educators are the critical connection between readers and their books. It is our responsibility to champion these rights.

We pledge to stand with, defend, and assist our colleagues and library users in fighting censorship in all its forms. Exposure to a wide variety of perspectives and the unfettered exchange of ideas is necessary to preserve the freedoms guaranteed in a democratic society. We oppose the restriction, removal, banning, and censorship of books and other library materials that limit the freedom to read, speak, publish, or obstruct intellectual freedom.

CT Library Association, 2/10/2022