

SOLANO COUNTY LIBRARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Monday, May 16, 2022

6:30 p.m.

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Non-confidential materials related to an item on this Agenda submitted to the Board after distribution of the agenda packet are available for public inspection at the Fairfield Civic Center Library, 1150 Kentucky Street, Fairfield, CA during normal business hours.

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM
3. INTRODUCTIONS
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR MEETING OF MARCH 21, 2022 (Attachment) - **ACTION**
5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - **ACTION**
6. PUBLIC COMMENT
Members of the public may speak for up to five (5) minutes per person, not to exceed 20 minutes.
7. CORRESPONDENCE
8. DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Attachment
9. OLD BUSINESS
 - a. The Council will discuss *Article VI: Amendment to Bylaws* of the Solano County Library Advisory Council Bylaws and may take action regarding adding “Agenda Building” to future agendas (Article IV, Section 4). After recommended change has been approved by the Council, such change will be presented to the Board of Supervisors at a regular meeting for their approval (Amendment #5, February 10, 2009). (Attachment) **ACTION**
10. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Collection Development - Receive a presentation on Solano County Library's materials selection policy and procedures from Mike Eitner, Assistant Director of Library Services.
11. ANNOUNCEMENTS/MEMBER REPORTS
12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – July 18, 2022
13. ADJOURNMENT

Minutes of the
SOLANO COUNTY LIBRARY ADVISORY COUNCIL
Monday, March 21, 2022

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Chair McCallum at 6:31p.m.

2. ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM:

Members Present: Noah Dove, Dave McCallum, Kelli Mahoney, Sergio Maciel, Dotty Schenk, Neil Hall, Stephanie Cobb, Ariel Ortila, Lloyd McCabe, Diane Barney

Members Absent: Maria Hernandez

Others Present: Suzanne Olawski, Solano County Library Director of Library Services; Lisa Lin, Solano County Library Administrative Manager, Cathy Sheldon, Solano County Library Office Assistant III, Brenda Guzman, Solano County Library Office Assistant II

3. INTRODUCTIONS:

Ms. Olawski introduced Lisa Lin, Admin Services Manager, Solano County Library.

Ms. Helen Vinson, Ms. Page Frechette, and Ms. Kay Juhl, Friends of the Vacaville Libraries were in attendance.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES AS MAILED FOR MEETING OF January 24, 2022:

Ms. Cobb moved to approve the January 24, 2022 meeting minutes; Ms. Schenk seconded. Motion carried. So ordered by 6-0 vote. Ms. Barney abstaining.

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA.

Mr. McCabe moved to approve the March 21, 2022 agenda; Mr. Hall seconded. Motion carried. So ordered by 7-0 vote.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Vinson stated the Vacaville newspaper stated the Council was going to discuss the expansion of the Vacaville Cultural Center Library and the Friends of the Library bookstore. Ms. Vinson stated the Friends raise money for Summer Reading programs and year-round programming along with other non-programming items for the Vacaville libraries. There is not enough space to hold book sales and store books. The Friends need dedicated space for a bookstore and storage.

Ms. Frechette stated she would like space allocated to the Friends for book sales and storage. She stated this has been discussed for over 10 years and wonders if it will ever happen in her lifetime.

Ms. Juhl stated space for a bookstore has been tabled before and then rescheduled. It's been more than 10 years, and still no space. Preparing for the book sales is very time

intensive. As years come and go, there are less volunteers and less active membership at meetings. She feels the Friends will spend time preparing for book sales, advertising, etc. it will be like “throwing a party that no one comes to.” Dedicate space is needed to support ongoing book sales in order to keep supporting the libraries.

7. CORRESPONDENCE:

Ms. Olawski presented a card she received from Mr. Ronald Heinrich (former member of the Solano County Library Advisory Council). Mr. Heinrich thanked the Council for sending a resolution in his honor for his many years of service on the Council.

8. DIRECTOR’S REPORT:

In addition to Ms. Olawski’s written report, she reported the Vallejo Unified School District is moving forward with the Memorandum of Understanding for the Student Access Card program. Ms. Olawski will keep the Council up to date with the progress of this partnership. The school district stated they would like the program in place by August 2022 at the start of the new school year.

The Solano County Library Foundation is holding a Juneteenth celebration of African American Culture: *Migrating and Moving Forward* at the Hilton Garden Inn on June 25, 2022. Keynote speaker is Willie L Brown, former State Assembly Speaker and Mayor of San Francisco.

The Vacaville Cultural Center Library (VCC) expansion project is moving forward. There are display boards at VCC for the public interaction to indicate why they come to the library and how they use the library. Ms. Olawski reported she received a date for the design team community input meeting which will be on April 5, 2022, 4:00-5:00 p.m. at the Vacaville Cultural Center Library. The community input will inform space needs for the library. There is also an online survey available for community input which is on the library’s website. Mr. McCallum inquired how the word is getting out about the meeting; Ms. Olawski stated through media releases, the library’s website, and social media. Mr. McCallum will publicize the information on local radio.

Mr. Hall inquired about the state park initiative. Ms. Olawski stated there are two programs, one with Solano County Parks and the other with California State Parks. The Library will partner with Solano County Parks to promote outdoor learning and (re)introduce individuals and families to the great outdoors in Solano County and offer backpacks for check-out. State Park Passes will provide a free day use admission to select state parks. Ms. Olawski stated she will update the Council as she receives more information.

9. OLD BUSINESS:

- a. The Council will discuss *Article VI: Amendment to Bylaws* of the Solano County Library Advisory Council Bylaws and may take action regarding adding “Agenda Building” to future agendas (Article IV, Section 4). After recommended change has been approved by the Council, such change will be presented to the Board of

Supervisors at a regular meeting for their approval (Amendment #5, February 10, 2009). (Attachment) **ACTION**

This item is postponed until the May 16, 2022 meeting.

- b. The Council will discuss and may take action on correspondence to the Vacaville Friends in support of space for a bookstore as part of the Vacaville Cultural Center Library expansion project. **ACTION**

Mr. Hall moved to approve a written correspondence to the Vacaville Friends in support of space for a bookstore as part of the Vacaville Cultural Center Library expansion project; seconded by Mr. McCabe. Motion carried. So ordered 10-0 vote.

10. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. The Council will discuss the FY 2022/23 requested budget and may take action. (Attachment) **ACTION**

Ms. Cobb moved to approve the FY 2022/23 requested budget; Mr. Hall seconded. Motion carried. So ordered 10-0 vote.

- b. The Council will discuss *Article II, Section 4: Members of Advisory Council* of the Solano County Library Advisory Council Bylaws. The Chair of the Council may request a new appointment be made to represent the City of Vallejo. (attachment)

The current member representing the City of Vallejo has not attended at meeting since May 2021. Chair McCallum requested a new appointment from the City of Vallejo to the Solano County Library Advisory Council. Ms. Olawski will notify the City of Vallejo.

11. ANNOUCEMENTS/MEMBERS REPORTS:

- a. Mr. Dove inquired if the windows at the JFK Library in Vallejo have been fixed. The windows have been repaired (please see Director's Report)
- b. Ms. Schenk reported she attended Brown Act/Ethics training in November 2021 at her church.
- c. Ms. Barney was not able to attend the Amy Tan event but congratulated the library on a great program. She's looking forward to the Library Foundation Juneteenth event. Ms. Barney thanked the Friends of the Library for all their support.
- d. Mr. Maciel apologized for being tardy. He was at the wrong location.
- e. Ms. Mahoney attended the Amy Tan event with her daughter and stated it was

amazing!

- f. Mr. McCabe stated the Dixon Library is doing well. Mr. McCabe reported he attended Brown Act/Ethics training in February 2021.
- g. Mr. McCallum expressed concern about banned book movements across the country and consideration of a stand against this movement. Ms. Olawski stated the Council will receive a presentation from staff about the Library's materials selection policy and procedures at the next meeting.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

May 16, 2022.

13. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.



Suzanne Olawski
Director of Library Services

**BYLAWS OF THE
SOLANO COUNTY LIBRARY ADVISORY COUNCIL**

ARTICLE I: PURPOSE

The Council shall act in an advisory capacity to the Director of Library Services and to the Board of Supervisors in all matters pertaining to library service.

ARTICLE II: MEMBERS OF ADVISORY COUNCIL

Section 1: The Council shall consist of the following members: (a) five such members representing and residing within a different county supervisorial district, to be appointed by the supervisor representing such district, plus (b) a number of members equal to the number of cities or other public agencies within Solano County operating a public library, and which are a part of the Solano County Library system, each such member representing and residing within the boundaries, and to be appointed by the governing body of each such city or public agency.

Section 2: Each Council member is appointed for a term, determined by the appointing body.

Section 3: A Council member whose term has expired may serve until a replacement has been appointed.

Section 4: Unexplained absence of members for **two** (2) consecutive meetings of the Council shall be considered as an expression of lack of interest in this program. The Chair of the Council may then request that a new appointment be made to represent this area.

Section 5: Members of the Library Advisory Council shall serve without compensation.

Section 6: Vacancies in the office of a member shall be filled for the unexpired term by the appointing body.

ARTICLE III: MEETINGS

Section 1: Regular meetings of the Library Advisory Council shall be held on the third Monday of every other month at 6:30 p.m. in a designated area of a Solano County Library branch.

Section 2: Exceptions to the regular meeting time and place may be made by appropriate motion or resolution.

Section 3: If all necessary business cannot be accommodated at a regularly scheduled meeting, an adjourned regular meeting may be scheduled. In such an instance, the regular meeting is adjourned to a time and place specified before the close of the regular meeting. Appropriate public notice shall be posted for the adjourned meeting following the provisions of the Brown Act, Government Code 354.

Section 4: Seventy-two (72) hours notice shall be given for all regular meetings.

Section 5: Special meetings may be called by the Chair or a majority of the members of the Council or the Director of Library Services, providing that notice has been given to all Council members and others as noted in Article V, Section 7 (2) and the news media at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the special meeting.

Section 6: A quorum shall consist of a majority of the filled seats on the Council.

Section 7: The annual meeting shall be held at the time of the first regular meeting after the first of October each year.

ARTICLE IV: CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

Section 1: No business shall be transacted at any meeting of the Library Advisory Council other than those matters named in the publicly posted agenda. (See Article IV, Section 4.

Section 2: All meetings shall be conducted under Robert's Rules of Order, unless in violation of applicable codes.

Section 3: All meetings of the Library Advisory Council shall be called to order by the Chair, or in the Chair's absence, by the Vice-Chair, or in the Vice-Chair's absence, by a Council member designated for that purpose by the Chair or Vice-Chair.

Section 4: The order of business at the regular meetings shall be as follows:

- (1) Call to order
- (2) Roll call and establishment of quorum
- (3) Introductions
- (4) Approval of minutes of prior meeting
- (5) Approval of agenda
- (6) Public comment*
- (7) Correspondence
- (8) Report from Solano County Director of Library Services
- (9) Old business
- (10) New business
- (11) Announcements/Member reports
- (12) Date of next meeting
- (13) Adjournment

*Members of the public may speak for up to five (5) minutes per person, not to exceed 20 minutes.

Section 5: An affirmative vote of the majority of all members of the Council present (quorum) at the time shall be necessary to approve any action before the Council. The Chair or any member of the council may call for a roll call vote or qualified ballot vote. Unless such vote is called for, action may be taken by voice vote.

Section 6: The Chair shall vote on all matters and shall have equal privileges as a member including the right to surrender the chair for purpose of making motions, introducing resolutions or making nominations.

Section 7: Action shall be taken only by resolution or motion of the Library Advisory Council.

ARTICLE V: OFFICERS AND ELECTIONS

Section 1: The elected officers of the council are the Chair who will chair all meetings, and the Vice-Chair who will preside in the Chair's absence. The Solano County Director of Library Services will serve as Secretary.

Section 2: Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair shall be held at the annual meeting.

Section 3: The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Library Advisory Council can hold office for not more than two consecutive one-year terms.

Section 4: In the event that the office of Chair becomes vacant prior to any annual meeting, an election to fill such vacancy for the unexpired term shall be held at the next meeting at which a quorum is present.

Section 5:

(1) The Chair shall preside at all meetings, appoint all committees, authorize calls for any special meetings, and generally perform the duties of the presiding officer. The Chair may appoint committees of one or more members each or representatives, delegates or spokespersons for such specific purposes as the council may require or recommend. The committee or individuals thus appointed shall be considered to be discharged upon the completion of its purpose and after the final report is made.

(2) The Vice-Chair shall act as Chair in the latter's absence.

Section 6:

(1) The Secretary in conjunction with the Chair shall prepare an agenda for each meeting, posting it in a location freely accessible to the public at least 72 hours before each regular meeting and at least 24 hours before each special meeting. The agenda must include a brief description of each item of business to be transacted or discussed at the meeting together with the time and location of the meeting.

(2) Copies of the agenda shall be sent to each library branch to post, and the City Editor of each of the major newspapers currently publishing in Solano County. The agenda and the minutes of the previous meeting with pertinent information shall be sent to all members of the Library Advisory Council, the Director of Library Services and the Librarian's Council, the County Administrator, the California State Library Consultant, the Vacaville Library Commission, the Vallejo Library Board, and each library branch manager to be made available to all library staff.

(3) The Secretary of the Library Advisory Council shall keep a true and accurate record of all proceedings and actions of the Council including those members present and absent. These minutes shall be approved at the next following meeting. The public reading of the minutes may be dispensed with and the minutes approved as published and presented.

(4) The Secretary shall notify the appointing body of any vacancies on the Council.

ARTICLE VI: AMENDMENT TO BYLAWS

Section 1: These bylaws may be recommended for amendment by presenting the proposed amendment(s) as an agenda item for full discussion and vote at a regular meeting and including this discussion in the minutes.

Section 2: After the recommended change has been approved by the Council, such change will be presented to the Board of Supervisors at a regular meeting for their approval.

Revised: February 10, 2009

Amendment #1- November 15, 1990

Article II, Section 3, was amended to read: A council member whose term has expired *may* serve until a replacement has been appointed.

Amendment #2- July 19, 1993

Article III, Section 1, was amended to read: Regular meetings of the Library Advisory Council shall be held on the third *Monday* of every other month at 7:00 p.m. in a designated area of a Solano County Library branch.

Amendment #3- July 17, 2000

Article IV, Section 4, was amended to change the order of business to add Public comment and Announcements/Member reports.

Amendment #4 – July 17, 2006

Article III, Section 1, was amended to change the meeting time to 6:30 pm.

Amendment #5 – February 10, 2009

Article VI, Sections 1 and 2 were amended to reflect Bylaw changes must be approved by the Board of Supervisors.

SOLANO COUNTY LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

The Solano County Library (“the Library”) selects materials for its collection that support its mission, vision, and values. As a result, the Library has materials in a variety of formats. The collection of the Solano County Library serves the educational, recreational, and entertainment needs of the community. At the same time, the collection reflects the racial, ethnic, cultural, and political diversity of Solano County. Usage and customer demand are the most important influences on the Library’s collection.

The foundation of the Solano County Library’s collection development policy is respect for each customer’s experience. The Solano County Library provides materials to the community without placing a value on one customer’s preferences over those of another.

The Solano County Library upholds the right of individuals to access information that others may find unorthodox, offensive, shocking, meritless, or of no interest. The Library does not intrude on the parent-child (relative-child, caregiver-child) relationship and allows community members to determine which materials are welcome in their homes. Inherent in this approach is the acknowledgement that every family and home is unique. As a result, the Library does not limit access to materials based on age or any other characteristic.

Moreover, the Solano County Library adheres to the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights and the following interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights: the Universal Right to Free Expression, Labeling and Rating Systems, Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors, and Access for Children and Young Adults to Nonprint Materials. Thus, the Solano County Library selects materials that have not been edited to remove what some may deem offensive content.

The Library uses the following criteria when determining whether to add a title to the collection:

1. Community needs and interest
2. Publicity and review
3. Demand, both current and anticipated
4. Relationship to the existing collection
5. Reputation and qualification of the creator, publisher, or producer
6. Suitability of the format to library circulation and use
7. Publication date
8. Price and availability from library vendors
9. Whether the title has been vetted through traditional channels of publication or release

Customers of the Solano County Library may also recommend the Library purchase a title. Purchase requests are subject to the above selection criteria.

The Solano County Library’s collection is constantly evolving. As new titles are added to the collection, the Library evaluates other titles to determine if they still have value for the community. For titles of an enduring nature, the Library makes every attempt to retain or replace them. To determine whether a title remains relevant to the community, the Library uses the following criteria:

1. Demand
2. Condition
3. Accuracy
4. Availability elsewhere

If the Library determines a title is no longer relevant to the community, it is deselected from the collection. Deselected titles may be given to one of the Friends of the Library groups for resale with the proceeds benefiting the Library.

The Library encourages the community to donate materials to the various Friends of the Library groups that support the Library. Materials donated directly to the Library are subject to the same selection criteria as other material. The Library does not guarantee a specific disposition for donated material and will not return donated materials. The most likely outcome for donated materials is that they will be given to one of the Friends of the Library groups.

Customers who express concern about a given title in Solano County Library's collection may initiate a process by which the Library reviews the title's placement in the collection. A separate procedure outlines the reconsideration process.

Final responsibility for collection development and maintenance rests with the Director of Library Services, who may delegate the responsibility to other staff members.

Approved by the Board of Supervisors on June 9, 2020

SOLANO COUNTY LIBRARY
CUSTOMER'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIAL
OR DISPLAY

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____

REPRESENTING: SELF: _____ ORGANIZATION (NAME) _____

.....

AUTHOR _____

TITLE/DISPLAY _____

1. How was this material/display brought to your attention?

2. How much of this item did you read/view/hear?

3. Are you concerned about the item/display as a whole or a specific part?

4. What objections do you have to the item/display (Please be specific)?

5. What do you believe is good about the item/display?

6. Please list any other items/displays you can recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective.

7. For what age group would you recommend this item/display?

8. What reviews have you read or heard of this item?

Additional Comments:

Signature

Date

.....

Branch _____

1. Staff Member _____

Date _____

2. Supervising Librarian _____

Date _____

3. Director of Library Services _____

Date _____

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.

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.

Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association supports equal and equitable access to all library resources and services by users of all ages. Library policies and procedures that effectively deny minors equal and equitable access to all library resources and services available to other users is in violation of the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*. The American Library Association opposes all attempts to restrict access to library services, materials, and facilities based on the age of library users.

Article V 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 includes free access to, and unrestricted use of, all the services, materials, and facilities the library has to offer. Every restriction on access to, and use of, library resources, based solely on the chronological age, apparent maturity, educational level, literacy skills, emancipatory or other legal status of users violates Article V. This includes minors who do not have a parent or guardian available to sign a library card application or permission slip. Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness should be able to obtain a library card regardless of library policies related to chronological age.

School and public libraries are charged with the mission of providing services and resources to meet the diverse interests and informational needs of the communities they serve. Services, materials, and facilities that fulfill the needs and interests of library users at different stages in their personal development are a necessary part of providing library services and should be determined on an individual basis. Equitable access to all library resources and services should not be abridged based on chronological age, apparent maturity, educational level, literacy skills, legal status, or through restrictive scheduling and use policies.

Libraries should not limit the selection and development of library resources simply because minors will have access to them. A library's failure to acquire materials on the grounds that minors may be able to access those materials diminishes the credibility of the library in the community and restricts access for all library users.

Children and young adults unquestionably possess First Amendment rights, including the right to receive information through the library in print, sound, images, data, social media, online applications, games, technologies, programming, and other formats.¹ Constitutionally protected speech cannot be suppressed solely to protect children or young adults from ideas or images a legislative body believes to be unsuitable for them.² Libraries and their library governing bodies should not resort to age restrictions in an effort to avoid actual or anticipated objections, because only a court of law can determine whether or not content is constitutionally protected.

Article VII of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, "All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use." This includes students and minors, who have a right to be free from any unreasonable intrusion into or surveillance of their lawful library use.³

The mission, goals, and objectives of libraries cannot authorize libraries and their governing bodies to assume, abrogate, or overrule the rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians. As

“Libraries: An American Value” states, “We affirm the responsibility and the right of all parents and guardians to guide their own children’s use of the library and its resources and services.”⁴ Libraries and their governing bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child. Libraries and their governing bodies shall ensure that only parents and guardians have the right and the responsibility to determine their children’s—and only their children’s—access to library resources. Parents and guardians who do not want their children to have access to specific library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their own children. Libraries and library governing bodies should not use rating systems to inhibit a minor’s access to materials.⁵

Libraries and their governing bodies have a legal and professional obligation to ensure that all members of the communities they serve have free and equitable access to a diverse range of library resources and services that is inclusive, regardless of content, approach, or format. This principle of library service applies equally to all users, minors as well as adults. Lack of access to information can be harmful to minors. Libraries and their governing bodies must uphold this principle in order to provide adequate and effective service to minors.

¹ *Brown v. Entertainment Merchant’s Association, et al.* 564 U.S. 08-1448 (2011).

² *Erznoznik v. City of Jacksonville*, 422 U.S. 205 (1975): “Speech that is neither obscene as to youths nor subject to some other legitimate proscription cannot be suppressed solely to protect the young from ideas or images that a legislative body thinks unsuitable for them. In most circumstances, the values protected by the First Amendment are no less applicable when government seeks to control the flow of information to minors.” See also *Tinker v. Des Moines School Dist.*, 393 U.S.503 (1969); *West Virginia Bd. of Ed. v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943); *AAMA v. Kendrick*, 244 F.3d 572 (7th Cir. 2001).

³ “Privacy: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*,” adopted June 19, 2002, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 2014; and June 24, 2019.

⁴ “Libraries: An American Value,” adopted on February 3, 1999, by ALA Council.

⁵ “Rating Systems: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*,” adopted on June 30, 2015, by ALA Council; amended June 25, 2019.

Adopted June 30, 1972, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991; June 30, 2004; July 2, 2008 *under previous name* “Free Access to Libraries for Minors”; July 1, 2014; and June 25, 2019.

The Universal Right to Free Expression: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Freedom of expression is an inalienable human right and the foundation for self-government. Freedom of expression encompasses the freedoms of speech, press, religion, assembly, and association, and the corollary right to receive information without interference and without compromising personal privacy.

The American Library Association endorses this principle, which is also set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. The Preamble of this document states that “. . . recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world. . .” and “. . . the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people. . . .”

Article 12 of this document states:

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor or reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 18 of this document states:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19 states:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers.

Article 20 states:

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

On December 18, 2013, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution reaffirming that the right to personal privacy applies to the use of communications technology and digital records, and requiring the governments of member nations to “respect and protect” the privacy rights of individuals.

We affirm our belief that these are inalienable rights of every person, regardless of origin, age, background, or views. We embody our professional commitment to these principles in the *Library Bill of Rights* and *Code of Ethics*, as adopted by the American Library Association.

We maintain that these are universal principles and should be applied by libraries and librarians throughout the world. The American Library Association's policy on International Relations reflects these objectives: ". . . to encourage the exchange, dissemination, and access to information and the unrestricted flow of library materials in all formats throughout the world."

We know that censorship, ignorance, and manipulation are the tools of tyrants and profiteers. We support the principles of Net neutrality, transparency, and accountability. We maintain that both government and corporate efforts to suppress, manipulate, or intercept personal communications and search queries with minimal oversight or accountability, and without user consent, is oppressive and discriminatory. The technological ability of commercial and government interests to engage in the massive collection and aggregation of personally identifiable information without due process and transparency is an abuse of the public trust and inimical to privacy and free expression. We believe that everyone benefits when each individual is treated with respect, and ideas and information are freely shared, openly debated, and vigorously tested in the market of public experience.

The American Library Association is unswerving in its commitment to human rights, but cherishes a particular commitment to privacy and free expression; the two are inseparably linked and inextricably entwined with the professional practice of librarianship. We believe that the rights of privacy and free expression are not derived from any claim of political, racial, economic, or cultural hegemony. These rights are inherent in every individual. They cannot be surrendered or subordinated, nor can they be denied, by the decree of any government or corporate interest. True justice and equality depend upon the constant exercise of these rights.

We recognize the power of information and ideas to inspire justice, to restore freedom and dignity to the exploited and oppressed, to change the hearts and minds of the oppressors, and to offer opportunities for a better life to all people.

Courageous people, in difficult and dangerous circumstances throughout human history, have demonstrated that freedom lives in the human heart and cries out for justice even in the face of threats, enslavement, imprisonment, torture, exile, and death. We draw inspiration from their example. They challenge us to remain steadfast in our most basic professional responsibility to promote and defend the rights of privacy and free expression.

There is no good censorship. Any effort to restrict free expression and the free flow of information through any media and regardless of frontiers aids discrimination and oppression. Fighting oppression with censorship is self-defeating. There is no meaningful freedom for the individual without personal privacy. A society that does not respect the privacy of the individual will be blind to the erosion of its rights and liberties.

Threats to the privacy and freedom of expression of any person anywhere are threats to the privacy and freedom of all people everywhere. Violations of these human rights have been recorded in virtually every country and society across the globe. Vigilance in protecting these rights is our best defense.

In response to these violations, we affirm these principles:

The American Library Association opposes any use of governmental prerogative that leads to intimidation of individuals that prevents them from exercising their rights to hold opinions without interference, and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas. We urge libraries and librarians everywhere to resist such abuse of governmental power, and to support those against whom such governmental power has been employed.

The American Library Association condemns any governmental effort to involve libraries and librarians in restrictions on the right of any individual to hold opinions without interference, and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas. Such restrictions, whether enforced by statutes or regulations, contractual stipulations, or voluntary agreements, pervert the function of the library and violate the professional responsibilities of librarians.

The American Library Association rejects censorship in any form. Any action that denies the inalienable human rights of individuals only damages the will to resist oppression, strengthens the hand of the oppressor, and undermines the cause of justice.

The American Library Association will not abrogate these principles. We believe that censorship corrupts the cause of justice and contributes to the demise of freedom.

Adopted January 16, 1991, by the ALA Council; and amended on July 1, 2014.

LABELING AND RATING SYSTEMS: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Libraries do not advocate the ideas found in their collections or in resources accessible through the library. The presence of books and other resources in a library does not indicate endorsement of their contents by the library. Likewise, providing access to digital information does not indicate endorsement or approval of that information by the library. Labeling and rating systems present distinct challenges to these intellectual freedom principles.

Many organizations use or devise rating systems as a means of advising either their members or the general public regarding the organization's opinions of the contents and suitability or appropriate age for use of certain books, films, recordings, websites, games, or other materials. The adoption, enforcement, or endorsement of any of these rating systems by a library violates the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights* and may be unconstitutional. If enforcement of labeling or rating systems is mandated by law, the library should seek legal advice regarding the law's applicability to library operations.

Viewpoint-neutral directional labels are a convenience designed to save time. These are different in intent from attempts to prejudice or discourage users or restrict their access to resources. Labeling as an attempt to prejudice attitudes is a censor's tool. The American Library Association opposes labeling as a means of predisposing people's attitudes toward library resources.

Prejudicial labels are designed to restrict access, based on a value judgment that the content, language, or themes of the resource, or the background or views of the creator(s) of the resource, render it inappropriate or offensive for all or certain groups of users. The prejudicial label is used to warn, discourage, or prohibit users or certain groups of users from accessing the resource. Such labels sometimes are used to place materials in restricted locations where access depends on staff intervention.

Viewpoint-neutral directional aids facilitate access by making it easier for users to locate resources. Users may choose to consult or ignore the directional aids at their own discretion.

Directional aids can have the effect of prejudicial labels when their implementation becomes proscriptive rather than descriptive. When directional aids are used to forbid access or to suggest moral or doctrinal endorsement, the effect is the same as prejudicial labeling.

Libraries sometimes acquire resources that include ratings as part of their packaging. Librarians should not endorse the inclusion of such rating systems; however, removing or destroying the ratings—if placed there by, or with permission of, the copyright holder—could constitute expurgation (see "Expurgation of Library Materials: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*"). In addition, the inclusion of ratings on bibliographic records in library catalogs is a violation of the *Library Bill of Rights*.

Prejudicial labeling and ratings presuppose the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is appropriate or inappropriate for others. They presuppose that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. The fact that libraries do not advocate or use proscriptive labels and rating systems does not preclude them from answering questions about them. The American Library Association affirms the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about resources they choose to read or view.

Adopted July 13, 1951, by the ALA Council; amended June 25, 1971; July 1, 1981; June 26, 1990; January 19, 2005; July 15, 2009; July 1, 2014.