

Materials Selection Policy

Washington Library Association / Gibbs Library (hereafter referred to as “Gibbs Library”) is committed to serving the informational, educational and recreational needs of its community. This Materials Selection Policy outlines the basic criteria for selection and retention of materials and electronic resources in the library collection. Materials that are selected for the library shall be based on the library’s mission statement as follows:

“The mission of the Gibbs Library is to serve as a volunteer-based center whose purpose is to enrich the lives of our community members with free access to programs, materials, and services that empower, educate, and inspire.”

The collection shall be carefully chosen for its value, timeliness and its suitability in meeting the needs of our small community. No book or other library material shall be excluded because of the possibility that such materials may come into the possession of children. As library staff cannot know the maturity level and/or family values of each patron, the responsibility for the use of materials by children and young adults rests with their parent(s) or legal guardian(s).

Selections Responsibility:

Selection of library materials shall be the direct responsibility of the Library Director. Members of the Board of Trustees may assist in the selection as needed.

Gifts & Donations:

As space allows, the Gibbs Library welcomes gifts and donations, but accepts them with the understanding that it has the right to handle or dispose of them in the best interests of the library. Materials may be added to the collection

provided they meet the library's standards of selection. By law, the library is not allowed to appraise the value of donated materials, though it can provide an acknowledgment of receipt of the items if requested by the donor, for tax purposes.

De-Selection /Weeding

The withdrawal of materials, also called de-selection or weeding, is an ongoing process used to maintain the collection's usefulness, current interest, and relevance. Only library staff are responsible for weeding the collection with the Library Director having the final say. This is authorized by the Board of Trustees. Withdrawn materials will be handled in a similar manner and under the same authority as donated materials.

Selection Criteria:

Materials shall be selected on the basis of probable appeal to a reasonable section of the community. Each item will be considered in terms of its merits, its intended audience and the library's budget. Criteria for selecting materials should include:

1. Relevance to the needs and interests of the community
2. Contemporary significance
3. Accuracy
4. Literary and artistic excellence
5. Clarity of presentation of facts and points of view
6. Relevance to the existing collection
7. Role in maintaining a balanced collection representing many points of view
8. Requests from library users.

Selection Aids:

1. Reviews in trade journals
2. Publishers forecasts, advertisements, and catalogs
3. Bibliographies listing items of interest and importance
4. Suggestions by members of the community

Interlibrary Loan:

Due to a limited budget and space, the Gibbs Library cannot provide all materials that are requested. Therefore, interlibrary loan is used to obtain from other libraries those materials that are beyond the scope of this library's collection.

In return for utilizing interlibrary loan to satisfy the needs of our patrons, the Gibbs Library agrees to lend its materials to other libraries through the same interlibrary loan network, and to make an effort to have its current holdings listed in a tool that is accessible by other libraries throughout the State of Maine.

Statement on Intellectual Freedom:

The Gibbs Library believes that reading, listening and viewing are individual, private matters. While anyone is free to select or reject materials for themselves or for their own minor-aged children, the freedom of others to read, listen and/or view cannot be restricted. The Board of Trustees adopts and supports the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement adopted by the American Library Association, both of which are attached.

Reconsideration of Library Materials:

The Gibbs Library is dedicated to open ideas and information and applies no restrictions on the right to read, listen or view, except for illegal or pornographic content via our computers or wireless internet connection. The library recognizes the rights of individuals to question materials in the library collection. In the event that a library patron objects to any materials included or excluded from the collection, the following procedures apply:

1. No materials so challenged shall be removed from the collection until the final decision by the Board of Trustees and Library Director is made.
2. The complaint must be complete and submitted in writing using the "Request for Reconsideration of Materials" form, available by request.

3. The Library Director shall contact the Intellectual Freedom Committees of the Maine Library Association and/or the American Library Association to apprise them of the situation.
4. The Library Director shall forward the request to the Board of Trustees within 5 calendar days of receipt by the Gibbs Library.
5. The Board of Trustees and Library Director shall meet with the Complainant at the next regular Board of Trustees meeting, scheduled at least 30 days after the date of receipt of the Complaint.
6. The Complainant must be present at the scheduled meeting in order for action to be taken, unless the Board of Trustees grants absence for good cause at the start of the meeting. If the Complainant is absent for the next scheduled board meeting, their Reconsideration Request will be dismissed.
7. The joint decision by the Board of Trustees and Library Director to keep or withdraw the item under consideration will be final. The Board of Trustees will notify the Complainant of its decision, in writing, within 7 calendar days.

Approved by the Board of Trustees: November 7, 2022

Gibbs Library Request for Reconsideration of Material Form

The board of trustees of Gibbs Library have established a materials selection policy and a procedure for gathering input about particular items. Completion of this form is the first step in that procedure. If you wish to request reconsideration of a resource, please return the completed form to the library director.

Gibbs Library
PO Box 348
40 Old Union Road
Washington, ME 04574

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Do you represent self? ___ Or an organization? ___

Name of Organization _____

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

___ Book (e-book) ___ Movie ___ Magazine ___ Audio Recording

___ Digital Resource ___ Game ___ Newspaper ___ Other

Title _____

Author/Producer _____

2. What brought this resource to your attention? _____

3. Have you examined the entire resource? If not, what sections did you review? _____

4. What concerns you about the resource? Please be specific; cite pages. _____

5. Are there resource(s) you suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic? If so, what are they? _____

6. What action are you requesting the committee consider? _____

Date: _____ Signature of Complainant: _____

-----Library use only below this line-----

Date Received by Library: _____

Date Reviewed by Library Director: _____

Date Reviewed by Washington Library Association Board of Trustees: _____

Date of Board meeting: _____

Action Taken by Board of Trustees: _____

Date Complete: _____

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.

"Library Bill of Rights", American Library Association, June 30, 2006.

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/> (Accessed May 7, 2022)

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The Freedom to Read Statement

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

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

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The 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 or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

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

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

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

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

We therefore affirm these propositions:

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

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new 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 that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process.

Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

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

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

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

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

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

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have 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 values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

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

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

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

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

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

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

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

"The Freedom to Read Statement", American Library Association, July 26, 2006.
<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement> (Accessed May 7, 2022)
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This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

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

A Joint Statement by:

American Library Association

Association of American Publishers

Subsequently endorsed by:

American Booksellers for Free Expression

The Association of American University Presses

The Children's Book Council

Freedom to Read Foundation

National Association of College Stores

National Coalition Against Censorship

National Council of Teachers of English

The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression