

Subject: Letter to the Editor - Orlando Sentinel
From: "Robin Shader" <rshader@nwrls.com>
Sent: 5/16/2018 5:54:22 PM
To: "board@flalib.org" <board@flalib.org>;

Good Afternoon,

Just FYI – The following letter to the editor was submitted to the Orlando Sentinel this afternoon. Seminole County is considering privatizing their library, and since FLA opposes privatization it seemed important that we publically oppose this effort.

Seminole County government is considering outsourcing operation of their award-winning public library to a private company. As the president of the Florida Library Association, and on behalf of over 1,000 members, I urge the community to pay close attention. Local leaders are doing their job by looking for ways to save taxpayer money, but short term savings realized by outsourcing may not be sustained in the long term.

The Florida Library Association believes it is not in the best interest of the residents of Florida for publically supported libraries to be managed by for-profit organizations. Therefore, the Association opposes any efforts to provide library service by contracting with such organizations. A for-profit company is accountable to investors, and by definition would prioritize profit over the needs of Seminole County residents. Public libraries were not established to make a profit, they exist to provide access to information and ideas so every member of the community can be informed and participate fully in society.

"Keeping Public Libraries Public: A Checklist for Communities Considering Privatization of Public Libraries," published by the American Library Association (www.ala.org), provides detailed questions that should be asked and answered when considering outsourcing library management. Concerned citizens are encouraged to read this document and ask questions.

Statistics available on the state library website show that over 70% of Seminole County residents have a library card. County leaders and library users should carefully consider what services they would give up in order for a privately-run company to make a profit.

Robin

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