



545 E. Tennessee St. | Ste. 100-D | Tallahassee, FL 32308 | 850-270-9205 | www.flalib.org

Statement on the Freedom to Read

The Florida Library Association (FLA) supports the freedom to read and the right to free speech. These activities are protected by the First Amendment, and FLA is committed to defending these rights for all library patrons.

As a chapter of the American Library Association, FLA endorses the Library Bill of Rights¹. This document prioritizes equal and equitable access for all individuals to a diverse library collection that does not exclude material “because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.” To that end, FLA advocates for library policies that support diverse and inclusive collections. Library books and materials should reflect the broad intellectual, recreational, and personal interests of all readers.

Library materials are carefully selected by trained professionals who follow established collection development policies and professional standards. When a parent or patron requests that a book, video, or other material in the library be reviewed for content or appropriateness for a specific audience, libraries will and should follow their internal policies for reviewing the challenged material. Materials should be given the due process of an objective review as determined by the library’s established policies. When library materials are removed without following the reconsideration process, this practice undermines the deliberate efforts of librarians to support diverse and inclusive collections. Banning, removing, or censoring material also violates the library patron's right to intellectual freedom and their freedom to read.

We support parents' rights to choose materials for their own children, and this right extends to all parents. One parent may not infringe on another parent's right to determine which library materials are appropriate or beneficial for their children. We encourage parents to cooperatively select materials with their children, and they are welcome to seek help from librarians or library professionals when choosing library materials.

The Florida Library Association recommends that schools, libraries, boards, and other decision makers:

- Follow their established policies when responding to requests to remove library materials;
- Consult with their administrators, educators, and librarians when considering requests for reconsideration;
- Utilize the expertise of their librarians and library professionals in making collection decisions that will impact all students or library patrons.

For additional resources, please see the American Library Association's Freedom to Read Statement².

¹ <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>

² <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>

The Florida Library Association is a statewide organization that promotes excellence in Florida libraries by advocating strongly for libraries and providing high quality professional and leadership development for a diverse community of library staff, volunteers, and supporters.

This statement was issued in January of 2022 by the Florida Library Association Board of Directors.