

TOULON PUBLIC LIBRARY

DISTRICT

**MATERIALS**

**SELECTION**

**POLICY**

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## MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Toulon Public Library District provides current, accurate, high demand, and high interest materials primarily to library patrons by acquiring, organizing and disseminating books, non-print materials, information and services that help educate, enrich, entertain, and inform.

The Toulon Public Library District is committed to supporting a culture of life-long learning, literacy and innovation in this community.

## **VISION STATEMENT**

Toulon Public Library District will strive to access information and materials from within and outside of our library building. We will strive to provide and use the latest technology available with our resources.

The Toulon Public Library District supports the individual's right to have access to ideas and information representing all points of view. The Board of Trustees of the Toulon Public Library District has adopted the American Library Association's LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS, THE FREEDOM TO READ AND FREEDOM TO VIEW statements, attached herewith.

## I. OBJECTIVES:

The Toulon Public Library District provides a wide range of services free to all members of the library district. To meet the technological, recreational and informational needs of the community with as broad an educational base as is found in Toulon library district, the library must not only build and maintain a large, well-balanced collection of print and non-print materials, but must also maintain access to technology and digital resources and materials. All different type of formats will be considered when selecting materials, thus taking into consideration also future technological advances that are, as of now, unforeseeable. It shall be the policy of this library to provide materials in whatever media, non-verbal as well as verbal, which will best meet the needs of the district.

This policy is to help guide those librarians who choose the materials to be added and withdrawn and to inform the public about the principles upon which these selections are made.

## II. RESPONSIBILITY:

The responsibility for the policy governing the inclusion of material in the library collection rests with the Board of Trustees. The actual task of selection has been delegated to the Library Director, lead librarian and the Children's Librarian. They will choose materials which fit within the following guidelines and the American Library Association's Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read statement.

## III CRITERIA FOR SELECTION AND MAINTENANCE:

A. New materials are selected on the basis of readability (easily read and understood by general public), accuracy of the information presented, format and the suitability of the material to the district. The existing holdings of the library are also taken into account so a variety and balance of opinion may be found. Exceptions to this might include "books as news," wherein newsworthy material can be made available to the public so they may read, examine and understand what the discussion is about and draw their own conclusions.

Material containing inaccurate information, lack of integrity or an intent to incite intolerance may be excluded as inappropriate.

B. DVD titles chosen for the collection shall include current, high demand blockbusters as well as other movies both fiction and non fiction.

C. In order to maintain a vital collection of current and historical materials, items

must be removed according to the same criteria by which new materials are added. Materials are judged on their own value, their value to the collection or a combination of the two.

Materials may be withdrawn if their appearance has deteriorated, if the information contained is no longer current or accurate or if the material, except for that with specific reference value, does not circulate for a long period of time. Excess space shall not be reason for keeping materials of dubious value.

D. Withdrawn materials will be disposed of in the most efficient manner possible either through book sale, donations to other non-profits including libraries, or recycling.

E. Consideration is always given repairing materials, if possible, before replacing them.

F. An inventory of the collection shall be done every 4 years.

#### IV. CENSORSHIP:

Book selection and book censorship differ in the following manner:

Selection is governed by economics, physical limitations, format or questionable authority of sources while censorship is the limiting of resources based on the subject, topic and/or ideas per se.

Materials of sound authority shall not be removed from the library shelves because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval. If it is determined that there is a lack of material of sound authority representing the opposite viewpoint and such material is available, it will be added for balance.

The Toulon Public Library District accepts and endorses in their entirety the American Library Association's Freedom to Read Statement, the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to View.

#### V. COMPLAINTS:

A. Patrons with complaints shall be referred to a staff member, depending upon the nature of the complaint. Should this not rectify the problem, the patron should fill out a reconsideration form and file it with the Library Director. The staff member and the Director will review the complaint and give a written response. In the rare case that the complaint is to be further pursued, the patron shall file a written request with the Library Director to bring the matter to the Board of Trustees for their consideration.

B. If staff members question any material in the collection whether processed

and cataloged or not, whether a part of or intended for the Adult or Children's collection, the piece of material in question shall be accompanied by a signed statement, listing specific reasons why the staff member considers the item unsuitable. The item and the statement should then be brought to the attention of the Library Director or another staff member.

The statement will be carefully reviewed and a recommendation will be made for final action. Then, the material will be reviewed and discussed by all parties concerned. The final decision will be made by the Library Director.

#### VI. GIFTS AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS:

The collection of the Toulon Public Library District has been enriched and enhanced by many donations of books and other materials that it would not otherwise have been able to afford or acquire. The Library is indeed grateful for these gifts. In accepting things of this nature, however, the Library reserves the privilege of deciding whether or not these should become Library property.

The decision to include gift materials is based upon the Library's standards of selection, the physical condition of the material, the Library's needs and the Library's facility to house the materials. The Library makes an effort to dispose of all gift material that is not added to the collection to the best advantage of all concerned.

The Library cannot accept special collections of materials that are to be kept together as a separate physical entity, nor can it accept gifts with restrictions as to use, permanence and /or location. Gift material will be integrated into the general collection with a bookplate identifying the donor if applicable.

Cash gifts will be used for the purchase of a memorial or tribute. The selection will be made by the library director based on the interests of the deceased, the wishes of the donor and the needs of the Library.

All gifts will be acknowledged and a formal receipt given upon request. No staff member will assign a monetary value to any gift nor include such information on any receipt.

## 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.

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. 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 group requesting their use.

## FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT

### 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:

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

### FREEDOM TO VIEW STATEMENT

The FREEDOM TO VIEW, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States . In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

- 1) To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
- 2) To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
- 3) To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
- 4) To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
- 5) To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council