

Cragin Memorial Library Materials Selection Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide the selection of materials and to inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made. This statement was approved and adopted on June 4, 1997 and reapproved on September 13, 2023 by the Cragin Memorial Library Board of Trustees which assumes full responsibility for all legal actions which may result from the implementation of any policies stated therein.

Statement on Intellectual Freedom

As a basis for formulating this selection policy, the Library Board has reviewed and wholly endorses the *Library Bill of Rights*, the *Freedom to Read Statement*, and the *Freedom to View Statement* of the American Library Association. The appendix of this policy statement contains copies of these documents.

The Library's Service Goals

The aim of the Cragin Memorial Library is make all of the library's collection easy to find and use, to avoid reluctance or embarrassment on the public's part in asking for materials, and to serve all of the public efficiently, pleasantly and without discrimination. For these reasons, the library's collection will be on open shelves, arranged to provide a maximum of self-service.

Objectives for All Areas of Collection Development

The selection of any given book is not a library endorsement of the viewpoint expressed. Selections are made solely on the merits of the book in relation to adding it to the collection and serving the needs of the readers. The Library should provide materials representing several viewpoints on public issues of a controversial nature. The Library will base its inclusions of materials on two factors: the quality of the materials and the demands of the community.

Collection Development Policy

In keeping with our mission statement, prepared and adopted in 1988 (see appendix), it is our policy to develop the collection with the most heavy emphasis on popular adult reading, by selecting and purchasing current high interest materials in both fiction and non-fiction, popular periodicals, and classic books. Our secondary emphasis is to select and purchase non-fiction materials that are timely, accurate and contain useful information to enable our patrons to inform themselves on all subjects that interest them, including information needed by children to complete school or other projects, and an overall enrichment of our entire collection of children's and young adult materials to promote a love of reading from the earliest ages.

Selection of Children's Materials Collection at the Cragin Memorial Library

The children's materials collection serves children from birth through age 12, as well as adults who care for children. Children's materials represent all reading levels for children through age 12 and consist of books, magazines, audio tapes, compact disks, video cassettes, toys and computer software. The children's librarian is responsible for selecting children's materials. Materials collected must meet standards of literary quality, accuracy, variety of viewpoint and diversity. Materials are selected in

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accordance with a collection development plan, which is revised yearly. All materials are accessible to the entire community; there are no restriction on what circulates.

Special conditions within all children's age and ability levels are carefully considered; materials are selected for good readers, slow readers, very young children, the disadvantaged, those with handicaps and the gifted. The children's collection duplicates materials from the adult collection if interest and reading level are appropriate and novels, adventure stories and paperbacks attract and help children get started in reading. Therefore, these kinds of materials are selected but do not replace the materials of better literary quality which make up the bulk of the permanent collection. Materials will be purchased that will help children learn about their development, such as puberty, babies, divorce and death.

Curriculum materials are the responsibility of the schools. Textbooks and media such as film strips and cassettes will not be purchased to support the curriculum or specific classes. In some cases, multiple copies of non-fiction and reference works will be purchased to meet the demands of mass assignments.

Weeding and Withdrawing

The American Library Association recommends the annual withdrawals should average about 5% of the total collection so that the Library can maintain and up-to-date and inviting collection. Lack of demand, obsolete or erroneous information and poor condition are the main reasons for discarding. Standard titles of lasting value (unless they are replaced by newer copies) and materials of special local interest will not be discarded. Discarded materials of possible interest will be offered to the Friends of the Cragin Memorial Library for their annual book sale. Any other material will be properly disposed.

Criteria and Responsibility for Selection

The Selection of library materials is the responsibility of the Library Director and designated staff. One of their main assignments is to continuously strengthen the collection by selecting materials of quality as well as materials in demand. Such factors are readability, accuracy, quality of writing, cost, format and existing holdings are taken into account. Reviewing media, standard lists of recommended titles and information provided by publishers are used to make materials selections. These may include, but are not limited to, *Kirkus Reviews*, *Library Journal*, *Publisher's Weekly*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *Public Library Catalog*, *School Library Journal* and *Children's Catalog*.

Extending Resources

The Library cannot purchase all materials requested but will attempt to extend its resources through cooperation with other libraries and information resources and active use of interlibrary loan.

Acceptance of Gifts

Gift materials will be subject to the same standards for inclusion, classification, housing, circulation and weeding as are purchased materials. A tax-deductible statement is the responsibility of the donor.

Controversial Materials

Since the Library does not advocate particular views or beliefs, the selection of any given book is not an endorsement of the viewpoint expressed. Nor are selection made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to the building of the collection

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and to serving the needs of readers. The Library may provide materials representing all possible approaches to public issues of a controversial nature. Philosophically, materials on a subject sold without legal restriction, could be admitted to the Library.

While the Library is aware that one or more persons may take issue with the selection of any items, the Library does not remove from the shelves items purchased in accordance with the policy outlined here. Nor will Library materials be marked in such a way as to show approval or disapproval, and all materials will stand on open shelves equally accessible to all patrons, except to protect a valuable item from damage or theft or other unavoidable physical restriction. Responsibility for reading, listening or viewing matter used by children is the responsibility of their guardians. Selection will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may come into the possession of children.

Request for Reconsideration of Materials

No challenged material which have been duly selected shall be removed from the Cragin Memorial Library collection except upon the recommendation of the Library Director or upon formal action of the Board of Trustees when a recommendation of the Director is appealed.

Procedure:

1. A patron challenging any part of the collection will be offered a copy of the Cragin Memorial Library Materials Selection Policy to read.
2. If material is still questions, the form, "Statement of Concern About Library Resources" will be filled out by the patron.
3. The Library Director will review the form and make a reply to the patron.
4. If the patron is not satisfied with the reply, he/she may bring the matter to the attention of the Board of Trustees.
5. The Board of Trustees will review the communication, the decision and the issues raised and will respond to the patron when the review process is complete.

The Board has the legal responsibility for the collection and its protection under the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution.

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Appendixes:

A. Mission of the Cragin Memorial Library

The Cragin Memorial Library has been the public library for the town of Colchester since 1905. It is the Library's mission to provide for the informational, cultural and recreational needs of the people of Colchester the provision of an organized collection of print, multimedia and electronic resources. The Library will work to provide people of all ages with high demand, high interest resources in a variety of formats.

B. The Library Bill of Rights-- <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>

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](#).

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C. Freedom to Read Statement--

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

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.

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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.

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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.

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.

Approved: June 4, 1997

Reapproved: September 13, 2023

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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

D. Freedom to View Statement--

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomviewstatement>

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

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