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## CHALLENGED MATERIALS

### *An Interpretation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS*

The American Library Association declares as a matter of firm principle that it is the responsibility of every library to have a clearly defined materials selection policy in written form which reflects the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS, and which is approved by the appropriate governing authority.

Challenged materials which meet the materials selection policy of the library should not be removed under any legal or extra-legal pressure. The LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS states in Article 1 that "Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation," and in Article 2, that "Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval." Freedom of expression is protected by the Constitution of the United States, but constitutionally protected expression is often separated from unprotected expression only by a dim and uncertain line. The Constitution requires a procedure designed to focus searchingly on challenged expression before it can be suppressed. An adversary hearing is a part of this procedure.

Therefore, any attempt, be it legal or extra-legal, to regulate or suppress materials in libraries must be closely scrutinized to the end that protected expression is not abridged.

Adopted June 25, 1971; amended July 1, 1981, by the ALA Council.

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