

Book industry and trade associations  
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VERTICAL FILE



AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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The American Library Association and the American Association of Publishers have revised and reissued the Freedom to Read Statement, a document hammered together in the midst of the Joseph R. McCarthy era, to bring it up to date to serve in the present phase of the war for freedom of communications. The Statement is now available as an attractively colored, accordion-fold poster for display in libraries, book stores, schools, offices and any other place concerned with intellectual freedom.

The original Statement emerged as a "giant step" toward this freedom and was born at the historical "Westchester Conference" at which national personalities in librarianship, education, publishing and industry met and "staked out a lofty claim" for First Amendment freedoms of speech and press.

It was felt that the 1953 document had served long and well in the ongoing battle but that certain sections no longer reflected accurately the broadening concerns for the freedom to read. ALA and the AAP considered one admonition particularly inappropriate: "The present laws dealing with obscenity should be vigorously enforced." That phrase and two others were deleted in the revision to make it clear that "there is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others."

The Freedom to Read Statement acknowledges that the suppression of books is just one part of a large pattern of suppression affecting all forms of the communications media: the press, film, radio and television.

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Overt censorship is not the only problem approached by the new statement. One's willingness to avoid controversy and follow the lead of others, particularly, in a time of great social strain, threatens the strength of our American freedoms. The Freedom to Read Statement points out that "Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain" and that only with freedom can change come by choice. Any limitation placed on the information we receive makes our society less able to deal with stress and less capable of understanding change, according to ALA and AAP.

The Freedom to Read Statement is featured on an attractive, accordion-folded poster on different shades of colored stock. It is available from the Office for Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611. Prices are 10 cents per single copy; \$2.00 per 25; \$3.00 per 50; and \$5.00 per 100 copies.

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