

# american libraries DIRECT

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## Tennessee bill threatens the state's freedom to read

A new [bill in the Tennessee legislature](#), the Parental Oversight of Public Libraries Act, could change what is offered at public libraries. [SB2896](#) and [HB2721](#) aim to create parental oversight boards at all public libraries that would determine whether any books related to sex and sexuality are age-appropriate.

Five board members would be appointed to two-year terms by each county's legislative body. Libraries that fail to comply with the proposed law could lose local funding and incur fines, and library workers could face jail time. Both [ALA](#) and the [Tennessee Library Association](#) have released statements opposing this legislation, which advances "censorship under the guise of parental control." The bill is similar to a [proposed law in Missouri](#) that is no longer on the legislative calendar...



*WBIR-TV, Knoxville, Tenn., Feb. 20; Cookeville (Tenn.) Herald-Citizen, Feb. 17; ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom, Feb. 20; Tennessee Library Association, Feb. 20*

## Mary Ghikas hangs up her hat

In March, Executive Director Mary Ghikas (right) will mark 25 years at ALA. Although she's stepping down on February 21, she will serve as deputy executive director until her retirement in June, working under [Tracie D. Hall](#), who will head the Association beginning February 24. Ghikas sat down with *American Libraries* to talk about her future plans, rising through the ranks as the only woman at the table, and how she came to be known for her signature hats...



*AL: The Scoop, Jan. 15, Feb. 21*



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## Tragic arson fire at Porterville City Library

Two 13-year-old boys have been arrested in connection with a deadly [fire at the Porterville \(Calif.\) City Library](#) that left [two firefighters](#) dead. Porterville Police Chief Eric Kroutil said the fire was reported about 4:15 p.m. on February 18. The teens were seen running from the library shortly after the fire erupted. Fire Capt. Raymond Figueroa, 35, and firefighter Patrick Jones, 25, died battling the blaze. The boys were booked into the Tulare County Juvenile Detention Facility on suspicion of arson, manslaughter, and conspiracy. [Irreplaceable books, artifacts,](#) and manuscripts on local and regional history were lost. The Tulare county and city libraries have [vowed to help](#) Porterville staff and patrons in any way they can....



*Porterville (Calif.) Recorder, Feb. 19–20; Los Angeles Times, Feb. 19; Associated Press, Feb. 20; Visalia (Calif.) Times-Delta, Feb. 20*

## Security guard killed at Spring Valley library

On the afternoon of February 18, a 52-year-old female security guard was sitting at her post on the third floor of the Finkelstein Memorial Library in Spring Valley, New York, when a man started stabbing Sandra Wilson repeatedly with a knife after she asked him to turn his music down. Two library patrons ran to help the woman and were able to pry the attacker off of the victim and hold him down until police were able to arrive while others tried to give the security guard CPR. The guard was pronounced dead at the hospital. [Blanchard Glaudin](#), a 25-year-old Spring Valley resident who was out on the streets after having been arrested for rape two months ago, was taken into custody....



*White Plains (N.Y.) Journal News, Feb. 19; WNBC-TV, New York City, Feb. 20*

## Price hikes in the works for .org domains

Timothy B. Lee writes: “The nonprofit Internet Society attracted widespread condemnation late in 2019 after announcing it was [selling the Public Interest Registry](#), a subsidiary that administers the .org domain, to a private equity firm called Ethos Capital. People were particularly alarmed because the move came shortly after ICANN [removed price caps](#) on registration and renewal fees for .org domains. That opened the prospect of big price hikes. On February 21, [Ethos Capital announced](#) it would voluntarily commit to limit price hikes for the next eight years. But under the new rules, it can still raise prices by 10% a year, more than doubling prices by 2028.”...



*Ars Technica, Feb. 21; July 1, Nov. 23, 2019; Ethos Capital, Feb. 21*

## Tech experts say digital disruption will hurt democracy

The years of almost unfettered enthusiasm about the benefits of the internet have been followed by [a period of techlash](#) as users worry about the actors who exploit the speed, reach, and complexity of the internet for harmful purposes. About half of the technology experts the Pew Research Center canvassed in summer 2019 predict that humans' use of technology will weaken democracy between now and 2030 due to the speed and scope of reality distortion, the decline of journalism, and the impact of surveillance capitalism. A third expect technology to strengthen democracy as reformers find ways to fight back against info-warriors and chaos....



*Pew Research Center, Feb. 21; New York Times, Dec. 15, 2019*

## How the 2020 Census will affect state budgets

Anne Stauffer, Rebecca Thiess, and Laura Pontari write: "The census kicks into full gear on April 1, and states are paying close attention. Not only will it determine the distribution of congressional seats, but the data collected will have a profound impact on state budgets. How? Because of the role that the census plays in creating the datasets and statistical indicators used by many federal grant programs—such as Medicaid, the State Children's Health Insurance Program, and the Women, Infants, and Children nutrition program—to apportion funding among states, local governments, and other grantees. Such programs [made up 32% of state revenues in 2017.](#)"...



*Pew Charitable Trusts, Feb. 20; Oct. 8, 2019*

## Every child on Earth threatened by climate change

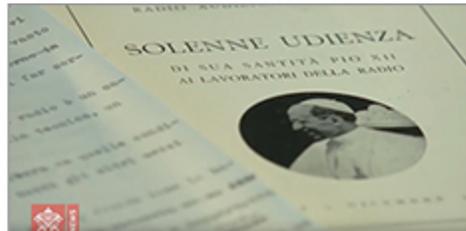
Every child on Earth faces an uncertain future due to the effects of climate change, and not one country is doing enough to ensure its children's sustained well-being, a new report says. The findings, [compiled](#) by more than 40 child and adolescent health experts in a commission convened by the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and the medical journal *The Lancet*, show that the health and future of every child and teen in the world is under threat. Climate change, ecological degradation, and advertising practices that push harmful products toward youth are just some factors that have created an uncertain future for children....



*Time, Feb. 19; The Lancet, Feb. 18*

## Vatican set to open Pope Pius XII archive

More than 150 historians and researchers have signed up to access the soon-to-open [Vatican archives of Pope Pius XII](#), evidence of the intense scholarly interest in the World War II-era pope and his record during the Holocaust, officials said February 20. Cardinal José Tolentino Calaça de Mendonça, the Vatican's chief librarian, told reporters that all researchers—regardless of nationality, faith, and ideology—were welcome to request permission to use the Vatican's Apostolic Library, which will open the archive on March 2. "The church has no reason to fear history," he told reporters....



*Associated Press, Feb. 20; Vatican News YouTube channel, Feb. 21*

## Your library and Junior Achievement

Angelique Kopa writes: "Baltimore County (Md.) Public Library partnered with the local [Junior Achievement](#), thanks in part to a grant from the Maryland State Library. This grant supports [Junior Achievement's Biztown program](#) (4:23), an interactive space where 5th graders from central Maryland go for a day to learn how to be a part of the economy of a town. There, the students take on a role in Biztown as the CEO or CFO of a company, the mayor of Biztown, or the library director. BCPL staff helped design the Biztown Library, developed the role of library director, and provided volunteers to staff the library."...



*ALSC Blog, Feb. 20; Junior Achievement of Central Maryland*



## Don't try to scam a librarian

Sean Gallagher writes: "Here's a clue for would-be internet financial scammers: Do not target librarians. They will catch on fast, and you will have wasted your time. On February 18, the outgoing chair of the YALSA Alex Awards Committee (and my wife) Paula Gallagher got a very odd email that purported to be from a colleague within her library system who is a member of YALSA's board. The email asked, 'Are you available to complete an assignment on behalf of the Board, And get reimbursed? Kindly advise.' The 'assignment' turned out to be a textbook payment scam."...



## New York Public Library visiting tips

The 42nd Street main branch of the New York Public Library isn't simply for tourists taking lion selfies or researchers hunching over obscure first editions. In fact, catching a peek of the "stacks train" and poking through a collection of 200-year-old menus is one of the best ways any New Yorker can spend a freezing Saturday afternoon. Here's how to navigate it all, according to author Ada Calhoun, librarian Rebecca Federman, and photography curator Julia Van Haaften....



*Vulture*, Feb. 21

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