

53.1.11

At the 2008 ALA Annual Conference, upon recommendation by the Council Intellectual Freedom Committee, the ALA Council adopted the following revision to ALA Policy 53.1.11.

53.1.11 Librarians have a professional responsibility to be inclusive, not exclusive, in collection development and in the provision of interlibrary loan. Access to all materials and resources legally obtainable should be assured to the user, and policies should not unjustly exclude materials and resources even if they are offensive to the librarian or the user. This includes materials and resources that reflect a diversity of political, economic, religious, social, minority, and sexual issues. A balanced collection reflects a diversity of materials and resources, not an equality of numbers. Adopted 1982, amended 1990, 2008.

(See "Policy Reference File": Diversity in Collection Development: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*: 1989-90 CD#61.3.)

Diversity in Collection Development

An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Collection development should reflect the philosophy inherent in Article II of the *Library Bill of Rights*: "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." Library collections must represent the diversity of people and ideas in our society. There are many complex facets to any issue, and many contexts in which issues may be expressed, discussed, or interpreted. Librarians have an obligation to select and support access to materials and resources on all subjects that meet, as closely as possible, the needs, interests, and abilities of all persons in the community the library serves.

Librarians have a professional responsibility to be inclusive, not exclusive, in collection development and in the provision of interlibrary loan. Access to all materials and resources legally obtainable should be assured to the user, and policies should not unjustly exclude materials and resources even if they are offensive to the librarian or the user. This includes materials and resources that reflect a diversity of political, economic, religious, social, minority, and sexual issues. A balanced collection reflects a diversity of materials and resources, not an equality of numbers.

Collection development responsibilities include selecting materials and resources in different formats produced by independent, small and local producers as well as information resources from major producers and distributors. Materials and resources should represent the languages commonly used in the library's service community and should include formats that meet the needs of users with disabilities. Collection development and the selection of materials and resources should be done according to professional standards and established selection and review procedures. Librarians may seek to increase user awareness of materials and resources on various social concerns by many means, including, but not limited to, issuing lists of resources, arranging exhibits, and presenting programs.

Over time, individuals, groups, and entities have sought to limit the diversity of library collections. They cite a variety of reasons that include prejudicial language and ideas, political content, economic theory, social philosophies, religious beliefs, sexual content and expression, and other potentially controversial topics. Examples of such censorship may include removing or not selecting materials because they are considered by some as racist or sexist; not purchasing conservative religious materials; not selecting resources about or by minorities because it is thought these groups or interests are not represented in a community; or not providing information or materials from or about non-mainstream political entities. Librarians have a professional responsibility to be fair, just, and equitable and to give all library users equal protection in guarding against violation of the library patron's right to read, view, or listen to materials and resources protected by the First Amendment, no matter what the viewpoint of the author, creator, or selector. Librarians have an obligation to protect library collections from removal of materials and resources based on personal bias or prejudice.

Intellectual freedom, the essence of equitable library services, provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause, or movement may be explored. Toleration is meaningless without tolerance for what some may consider detestable. Librarians must not permit their own preferences to limit their degree of tolerance in collection development.

Adopted July 14, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended January 10, 1990.

DIVERSITY IN COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT:

An Interpretation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

Throughout history, the focus of censorship has fluctuated vaecillated from generation to generation. Books and other materials have not been selected or have been removed from library collections for many reasons, among which are prejudicial language and ideas, political content, economic theory, social philosophies, religious beliefs, and/or sexual forms of expression, and other topics of a potentially controversial nature.

Some examples of this censorship may include removing or not selecting materials because they are considered by some as racist or sexist; not purchasing conservative religious materials; not selecting materials about or by minorities because it is thought these groups or interests are not represented in a community; or not providing information on or materials from non-mainstream political entities.

Librarians may seek to increase user awareness of materials on various social concerns by many means, including, but not limited to, issuing bibliographies and presenting exhibits and programs.

Librarians have a professional responsibility to be inclusive, not exclusive, in collection development and in the provision of interlibrary loan. Access to all materials legally obtainable should be assured to the user, and policies should not unjustly exclude materials even if they are offensive to the librarian or the user. Collection development should reflect the philosophy inherent in Article 2 of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS: "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." A balanced collection reflects a diversity of materials, not an equality of numbers. Collection development responsibilities include selecting materials in the languages in common use in the community which the library serves. Collection development and the selection of materials should be done according to professional standards and established selection and review procedures.

There are many complex facets to any issue, and variations of context in which issues may be expressed, discussed, or interpreted. Librarians have a professional responsibility to be fair, just, and equitable and to give all library users equal protection in guarding against violation of the library patron's liberty right to read, view, or listen to materials and resources

protected by the First Amendment, no matter what the viewpoint of the author, creator, or selector. Librarians have an obligation to protect library collections from removal of materials based on personal bias or prejudice, and to select and support the access to materials on all subjects that meet, as closely as possible, the needs and interests of all persons in the community which the library serves. This includes materials that reflect political, economic, religious, social, minority, and sexual issues.

Intellectual Freedom, the essence of equitable library services, ~~promotes no causes, furthers no movements, and favors no viewpoints.~~ It only provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a questions, cause, or movement may be explored. Toleration is meaningless without tolerance for what some may consider detestable. Librarians cannot justly permit their own preferences to limit their degree of tolerance in collection development, because freedom is indivisible.

~~(Note: This policy replaces the policy, RACISM, SEXISM, AND OTHER ISMS IN LIBRARY MATERIALS.)~~

Adopted July 14, 1982, by the ALA Council.

Revision Adopted January 9, 1990, by the Intellectual Freedom Committee.

DIVERSITY IN COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT:

see also 103.4.4
and attached

An Interpretation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

Throughout history, the focus of censorship has vacillated from generation to generation. Books and other materials have not been selected or have been removed from library collections for many reasons, among which are prejudicial language and ideas, political content, economic theory, social philosophies, religious beliefs, and/or sexual forms of expression.

Some examples of this may include removing or not selecting materials because they are considered by some as racist or sexist; not purchasing conservative religious materials; not selecting materials about or by minorities because it is thought these groups or interests are not represented in a community; or not providing information on or materials from non-mainstream political entities.

Librarians may seek to increase user awareness of materials on various social concerns by many means, including, but not limited to, issuing bibliographies and presenting exhibits and programs.

Librarians have a professional responsibility to be inclusive, not exclusive, in collection development and in the provision of interlibrary loan. Access to all materials legally obtainable should be assured to the user and policies should not unjustly exclude materials even if offensive to the librarian or the user. Collection development should reflect the philosophy inherent in Article 2 of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS: "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." A balanced collection reflects a diversity of materials, not an equality of numbers. Collection development and the selection of materials should be done according to professional standards and established selection and review procedures.

There are many complex facets to any issue, and variations of context in which issues may be expressed, discussed, or interpreted. Librarians have a professional responsibility to be fair, just, equitable, and to give all library users equal protection in guarding against violation of the library patrons' liberty to read, view, or listen to materials and resources protected by the First Amendment, no matter what the viewpoint of the author, creator, or selector. Librarians have an obligation to protect library collections from removal of materials based on personal bias or prejudice, and to select and support the access to materials on all subjects that meet, as closely as possible, the needs and interests of all persons in the community which the library serves. This includes materials that reflect political, economic, religious, social, minority, and sexual issues.

Intellectual freedom, the essence of equitable library services, promotes no

causes, furthers no movements, and favors no viewpoints. It only provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause, or movement may be explored. Toleration is meaningless without tolerance for what some may consider detestable. Librarians cannot justly permit their own preferences to limit their degree of tolerance in collection development, because freedom is indivisible.

(Note: This policy replaces the policy, RACISM, SEXISM, AND OTHER -ISMS IN LIBRARY MATERIALS.)

Adopted July 14, 1982 by the ALA Council.

(ISBN 8389-6552-0)

The IFC subcommittee to develop a statement of compatibility between the concerns expressed in the Resolution on Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Discrimination (Resolution on Racism and Sexism Awareness rev.) and the Library Bill of Rights submitted the following interpretation of the Resolution which was adopted by the Intellectual Freedom Committee, and is recommended to Council for adoption:

Fears have been expressed concerning possible acts of censorship, expurgation, and labelling of materials by librarians that might result from the Resolution on Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Discrimination. Fears have also been expressed that librarians acting to raise awareness of library users to the pressing problems of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination might compromise the library as it functions under the Library Bill of Rights.

Nothing in the Resolution authorizes censoring, expurgation, or labelling of materials. Actions and programs to raise the awareness of library users to any problem or condition would not be in conflict with the Library Bill of Rights when they are free of any element of advocacy. Both documents respect the rights of all who use libraries to do so freely and without being subjected to any pressures from any sources within the institution.

Attachment

6/28/78

Item #9

PMC #1 - CD#10

CD #43 (1981-82), "Operating Agreement between ALA and its Divisions."

Historical & Informational Notes: See Council Minutes, June, 1981, p 96, p. 260, PMC Report CD#44, Item 8, Council Minutes, July, 1982, pp 121-22 and 125.

Status/Recommendations: Wording proposed by PMC, June 1982, now appears as Policy 6.4. (See Item #3 above).

Item #10

PMC #1 - CD#10

CD #7 (1981-82), "Guidelines for National Conferences by Divisions."

Historical & Informational Notes: See Council Minutes, July, 1982, p. 125-26.

Status/Recommendations: Statement, as amended by Council, now appears in full in the language adopted, as Policy 7.4.10 .

Item #11

PMC #1 - CD#10

CD# #64 (1981-82), "Authorization to Borrow Money."

Historical & Informational Notes: See Council Minutes, July, 1982, p. 129.

Status/Recommendations: \$1,000,000 substituted for former borrowing ceiling in Policy 8.1.5.

Item #12

PMC #1 - CD#10

CD#74 (1981-82), "National Library Symbol."

Historical & Informational Notes: See Council Minutes, July, 1982, p. 131

Status/Recommendations: Now appears in Policy Manual as Policy 50.13.

Item #13

PMC #1 - CD#10

CD #85 (1981-82), "Diversity in Collection Development: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights."

Historical & Informational Notes: This interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights was submitted to supercede Policy 52.1.1, "Combating Prejudice, Stereotyping and Discrimination." See Council Minutes, July, 1982, p. 133.

Status/Recommendations: Now appears in abridged form as Policy 53.1.10.

53.1.10

The IFC subcommittee to develop a statement of compatibility between the concerns expressed in the Resolution on Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Discrimination (Resolution on Racism and Sexism Awareness rev.) and the Library Bill of Rights submitted the following interpretation of the Resolution which was adopted by the Intellectual Freedom Committee, and is recommended to Council for adoption:

Superseded by →

Fears have been expressed concerning possible acts of censorship, expurgation, and labelling of materials by librarians that might result from the Resolution on Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Discrimination. Fears have also been expressed that librarians acting to raise awareness of library users to the pressing problems of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination might compromise the library as it functions under the Library Bill of Rights.

Nothing in the Resolution authorizes censoring, expurgation, or labelling of materials. Actions and programs to raise the awareness of library users to any problem or condition would not be in conflict with the Library Bill of Rights when they are free of any element of advocacy. Both documents respect the rights of all who use libraries to do so freely and without being subjected to any pressures from any sources within the institution.

Attachment

6/28/78

107.11.1

RESOLUTION ON PREJUDICE, STEREOTYPING AND DISCRIMINATION
(Revision of Resolution on Racism and Sexism Awareness)

WHEREAS, the Due Process and Equal Protection" clause of the 14th Amendment and of the American Library Association's Bill of Rights provides that no individual or group shall suffer prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination because of race, sex, creed, color and national origin, and

WHEREAS, ours is a multicultural society, with people from European, Asian, African, Central and South American, Caribbean and Native American origins: all of whom have contributed to the cultural fabric of our society, and

WHEREAS, our laws, music, art, language and literature reflect the values of this diversity, and our schools and libraries should also reflect this reality, and

WHEREAS the American Library Association's Resolution on Racism and Sexism Awareness (Policy 107.11) does not include the broad spectrum of categories of persons and groups mentioned above,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the American Library Association's Resolution on Racism and Sexism Awareness be extended to read: (Underlined words are changes to the above resolution) That the American Library Association actively commit its prestige and resources to a coordinated action program that will combat prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination against individuals and groups because of race, sex, creed, color and national origin in the library profession and in library service by taking the following steps:

- (1) The ALA will survey library schools to determine the extent to which awareness training against prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination because of race, sex, creed, color and national origin form a part of the curricula and urge that such training be added to the curricula in every library school where it is not now included.
- (2) That the Library Administration - Personnel Administration Section will develop a model in-service program providing training for library personnel to develop sensitivity to combat prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination against individuals and groups because of race, creed, color and national origin.
- (3) The Public Library Association, the American Association of School Librarians, the Children's Services Division, the Young Adult Services Division, the Reference and Adult Services Division, and the Association of College and Research Libraries will be urged to develop a program to raise the awareness of library users to the pressing problem of prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination because of race, sex, creed, color and national origin.
- (4) The Resources and Technical Services Division will develop a coordinated plan for the reform of cataloging practices that now perpetuate prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination because of race, sex, creed, color and national origin.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the President and Executive Board assess the extent of implementation of these steps and report on progress by the 1978 Annual Conference.

Adopted by Council June 22, 1977

RESOLUTION ON RACISM & SEXISM AWARENESS
Adopted by the ALA Membership in Meeting
Friday, July 23, 1976

WHEREAS, during the last 200 years the United States has failed to equalize the status of racial minorities and of women, and

WHEREAS, the American Library Association has professed belief in the principle of equality yet has failed to aggressively address the racism and sexism within its own professional province;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the American Library Association actively commit its prestige and resources to a coordinated action program that will combat racism and sexism in the library profession and in library service by taking the following steps:

THE ALA WILL SURVEY LIBRARY SCHOOLS TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT TO WHICH RACISM AND SEXISM AWARENESS TRAINING FORM A PART OF THE CURRICULA AND URGE THAT SUCH TRAINING BE ADDED TO THE CURRICULA IN EVERY LIBRARY SCHOOL WHERE IT IS NOT NOW INCLUDED.

THE LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION-PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION SECTION WILL DEVELOP A MODEL IN-SERVICE PROGRAM PROVIDING RACISM AND SEXISM AWARENESS TRAINING FOR LIBRARY PERSONNEL.

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS, THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIVISION, THE YOUNG ADULT SERVICES DIVISION, THE REFERENCE AND ADULT SERVICES DIVISION, AND THE ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE AND RESEARCH LIBRARIES WILL BE URGED TO DEVELOP A PROGRAM TO RAISE THE AWARENESS OF LIBRARY USERS TO THE PRESSING PROBLEM OF RACISM AND SEXISM.

THE RESOURCES AND TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION WILL DEVELOP A COORDINATED PLAN FOR THE REFORM OF CATALOGING PRACTICES THAT NOW PERPETUATE RACISM AND SEXISM.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the President and Executive Board assess the extent of implementation of these steps and report on progress by the 1977 Annual Conference.

THIS RESOLUTION was placed before the Membership as MR#4; it was subsequently amended and adopted in the above form. Original version was endorsed by: Asian American Caucus; Black Caucus; Board of Directors of REFORMA; Social Responsibilities Round Table Action Council; SRRT Chicano Task Force.

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Item: INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM Item Number: 103.4.4
Approved by: ALA Council Page: 1 of 3
Issue Date: February, 1973 Supersedes: _____

SEXISM, RACISM AND OTHER "ISMS" IN LIBRARY MATERIALS

An interpretation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

Traditional aims of censorship efforts have been to suppress political, sexual or religious expressions. The same three subjects have also been the source of most complaints about materials in library collections. Another basis for complaints, however, has become more and more frequent. Due, perhaps, to increased awareness of the rights of minorities and increased efforts to secure those rights, libraries are being asked to remove, restrict or reconsider some materials which are allegedly derogatory to specific minorities or which supposedly perpetuate stereotypes and false images of minorities. Among the several recurring "isms" used to describe the contents of the materials objected to are "racism" and "sexism."

Complaints that library materials convey a derogatory or false image of a minority strike the personal social consciousness and sense of responsibility of some librarians who - accordingly - comply with the requests to remove such materials. While such efforts to counteract injustice are understandable, and perhaps even commendable as reflections of deep personal commitments to the ideal of equality for all people, they are - nonetheless - in conflict with the professional responsibility of librarians to guard against encroachments upon intellectual freedom.

This responsibility has been espoused and reaffirmed by the American Library Association in many of its basic documents on intellectual freedom over the past thirty years. The most concise statement of the Association's position appears in Article II of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS which states that "Libraries should provide books and materials presenting all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times; no library materials should be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval."

While the application of this philosophy may seem simple when dealing with political, religious or even sexual expressions, its full implications become somewhat difficult when dealing with ideas, such as racism or sexism, which many find abhorrent, repugnant and inhumane. But, as stated in the FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT,

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

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will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society each individual is free to determine for himself what he wishes 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... We realize that 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.

Some find this creed acceptable when dealing with materials for adults but cannot extend its application to materials for children. Such reluctance is generally based on the belief that children are more susceptible to being permanently influenced - even damaged - by objectionable materials than are adults. The LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS, however, makes no distinction between materials and services for children and adults. Its principles of free access to all materials available apply to every person, as stated in Article V, "The rights of an individual to the use of a library should not be denied or abridged because of his age, race, religion, national origins or social or political views."

Some librarians deal with the problem of objectionable materials by labeling them or listing them as "racist" or "sexist." This kind of action, too, has long been opposed by the American Library Association in its STATEMENT ON LABELING, which says,

If materials are labeled to pacify one group, there is no excuse for refusing to label any item in the library's collection. Because authoritarians tend to suppress ideas and attempt to coerce individuals to conform to a specific ideology, the American Library Association opposes such efforts which aim at closing any path to knowledge.

Others deal with the problem of objectionable materials by instituting restrictive circulation or relegating materials to closed or restricted collections. This practice, too, is in violation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS as explained in RESTRICTED ACCESS TO LIBRARY MATERIALS which says,

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Too often only "controversial" materials are the subject of such segregation, leading to the conclusion that factors other than theft and mutilation were the true considerations. The distinction is extremely difficult to make, both for the librarian and the patron. Unrestrictive selection policies, developed with care for the principles of intellectual freedom and the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS, should not be vitiated by administrative practices such as restricted circulation.

The American Library Association has made clear its position concerning the removal of library materials because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval, or because of pressures from interest groups, in yet another policy statement, the RESOLUTION ON CHALLENGED MATERIALS:

The American Library Association declares as a matter of firm principle that no challenged material should be removed from any library under any legal or extra-legal pressure, save after an independent determination by a judicial officer in a court of competent jurisdiction and only after an adversary hearing, in accordance with well-established principles of law.

Intellectual freedom, in its purest sense, promotes no causes, furthers no movements, and favors no viewpoints. It only provides for free access to all ideas through which any and all sides of causes and movements may be expressed, discussed and argued. The librarian cannot let his own preferences limit his degree of tolerance, for freedom is indivisible. Toleration is meaningless without toleration for the detestable.