

HB 0785 VOTE “UNFAVORABLE” or “NO”.

These are to be the “new standards” for school, county, regional, and other libraries in Maryland

23–102.1.19

(A) IT IS THE GOAL OF THE STATE THAT EACH LIBRARY IS OPERATED IN A MANNER THAT RECOGNIZES THE FOLLOWING STANDARDS:

(1) LIBRARY MATERIALS, SERVICES, AND RESOURCES EXIST AND SHOULD BE PROVIDED FOR THE INTEREST, INFORMATION, AND ENLIGHTENMENT OF ALL PERSONS THE LIBRARY SERVES;

(2) A LIBRARY SHOULD NOT EXCLUDE MATERIAL FROM ITS CATALOGUE BECAUSE OF THE ORIGIN, BACKGROUND, OR VIEWS OF A PERSON WHO CREATED THE MATERIAL; AND

(3) A LIBRARY SHOULD NOT PROHIBIT OR REMOVE MATERIAL FROM ITS CATALOGUE BECAUSE OF PARTISAN OR DOCTRINAL DISAPPROVAL.

Frankly, all libraries are already doing item (A)(1) based on oversight by each library’s board, so there is no need for a State standard. But items (A)(2) and (3) are State over-reach. Alarmingly these two items are straight from the American Library Association (ALA) Library Bill of Rights¹. Yet the ALA has become one of the most partisan and ideological-driven associations such that libraries across the country are choosing to end their membership^{2,3}. Concerning to many parents the ALA Bill of Rights item VII states people **regardless of age** possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. This is inconsistent with the rights of parents to direct their child’s upbringing without interference from a library, particularly on sensitive topics. The ALA has caused such wide concerns a fledgling entity, the World Library Association⁴, is forming.

The ALA’s president, Emily Drabinski, fueled additional concerns of being partisan and ideologically driven in a tweet where she wrote “I just cannot believe that a Marxist lesbian who believes that collective power is possible to build and can be wielded for a better world is president-elect of @ALALibrary”. She since deleted the tweet. So at a time when libraries across the country are breaking ties with the ALA for its partisanship, our State is choosing to require ALL libraries receiving state funding to adopt ALA standards instead of supporting local control - local tax-payers serving on local boards and councils making decisions.

This bill indicates the State will tell librarians they cannot exclude material because of the origin, background, or views of a person who created material. BUT a librarian can inappropriately include material simply because of the origin, background or views of a person who created the material? The State will tell librarians they cannot prohibit or remove material from the catalogue because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval. BUT the librarian can inappropriately add to or promote material in the catalogue because it has partisan or doctrinal approval from groups or individuals significant to that

¹ <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>

² <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/10/31/florida-conservative-national-library-ala-00124516>

³ <https://www.wabe.org/georgia-senators-debate-state-pullout-from-accrediting-american-library-association/>

⁴ <https://worldlibraryassociation.org/right-to-read-act/>

librarian? This is madness. Libraries must remain politically neutral and implement local community-aligned policies.

This bill will allow the State to require all libraries to adopt these ALA standards or they will be beaten with the heavy-handed club of losing state funding (ie money from state tax payers who are increasingly concerned about the partisanship and ideology-driven motives of some librarians and the ALA). And the State usurps local/regional library boards' employment responsibility by adding additional criteria limiting employee terminations. State government is putting itself in a position of preventing library employers from terminating employees related to obscenity laws. Our local county council provides significant tax-payer funding to our local public library but will no longer have any influence in these areas of significant taxpayer concern...the local library board will say the state is making them enact these standards or they will lose state funding. This ties the hands of the local councils and hence local taxpayers.

This bill is state over-reach, adds state over-sight that is unnecessary, and fails to respect local taxpayer/community over-sight of its libraries. I urge you to vote "UNFAVORABLE" or "NO" to HB0785.

Respectfully,
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