



Material Review & Reconsideration Policy

Mission Statement

The East Haven Library Inc., colloquially known as the Hagaman Memorial Library, is a center for community enrichment and, as such, seeks to provide information, resources and programs for lifelong learning, and to improve to the quality of life of local residents through access to an excellent collection of materials in multiple formats, current technology, and cultural and other programming opportunities.

Purpose of the Material Review & Reconsideration Policy

This policy of the Hagaman Memorial Library (the “Library”) provides librarians and library staff members with guidance, and establishes a process for members of the public with a vested interest to challenge any library and other educational material, display, or program. All library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in **Section 46a-64 of the General Statutes**. For more information on the selection of library materials, programs, and displays, please review the **Collection Development & Maintenance Policy, Library Program Policy, and Library Display Policy**.

The Library welcomes expressions of opinion concerning materials, programs, or displays. Any individual representing their own vested interest, who is an East Haven resident with a valid Hagaman Library Card, who wishes that a specific item, program, or display be reconsidered must first read or view the complete work, and may then complete and submit a **Request for Reconsideration Form**. In accordance with **Public Act 25-168 Sec. 322, 323** Hagaman Library abides by the following statutory requirements:

- No library material, display, or program shall be removed, or programs be cancelled, because of the origin, background or viewpoints expressed in such material, display or program, or because of the origin, background, or viewpoints of the creator of such material, display or program.
- Library materials, displays, and programs shall only be excluded for legitimate professionally accepted standards of collection maintenance practices as adopted in the Collection Development & Maintenance Policy, Display Policy, and Program Policy.
- The materials review and reconsideration process for petitioners to challenge any library material, display, or program shall neither favor nor disfavor any group based on protected characteristics.
- The individual completing a reconsideration form must include specific information about which portion or portions of such material they object to and provide an explanation of the reasons for such objection. The Request for Reconsideration form must include the individual's full legal name, address, and telephone number.



- Reconsideration requests are not confidential patron records under section 11-25 of the general statutes.
- Any library material being challenged will remain available in the library according to its catalog record and be available for a resident to reserve, check out or access until a final decision is made by the Library Director.

Key Definitions

“Library and other educational material” means any material belonging to, on loan to, or otherwise in the custody of a public library, including, but not limited to, nonfiction and fiction books, magazines, reference books, supplementary titles, multimedia and digital material and software. It is the assemblage of all materials owned or licensed or otherwise in the custody of a public library in both physical and digital formats, and made available to the public at no cost.

“Public library staff member” means a staff member of a public library, a public librarian, any staff member whose assignment is in the public library or any individual carrying out or assisting with the functions of a public library. This includes all professional staff, nonprofessional staff, and the Library Director.

“Individual with a vested interest” means any individual residing in the town in which the public library is located or the town in which the contract library is located at the time a reconsideration form is filed. To request reconsideration of materials, the individual must be representing their own interest and have a Hagaman Library Card.

“Remove” means deliberately taking library material out of a library's collection. “Remove” does not include the process of clearing such collection of any materials that are no longer useful.

Review Process

The Library Director, along with their designated staff, will evaluate any complete Request for Reconsideration Form delivered in person to Hagaman Library. Forms submitted by mail or email, or those that are not filled out in their entirety or that do not meet the requirements outlined in this Policy will not be considered or receive a response.

For Request for Reconsideration Forms that meet the requirements outlined in this Policy, the Library Director will read the challenged material in its entirety, evaluate the challenged material against the Collection Development & Maintenance Policy, and make a written decision on whether or not to remove the challenged material not later than sixty days from the date of receiving such request. The Library Director shall provide a copy of the Library Director's decision and report to the individual who submitted the Form.

Final authority regarding the removal or retention of library material ultimately resides with the



Library Board of Trustees. Only after having successfully submitted a Request for Reconsideration Form and receiving a response from the Library Director, the person who submitted the original request may choose to submit an appeal of the decision of the Library Director. Requests for appeal must be submitted in writing and delivered in person to the Library Director, who will deliver the appeal request to the Board Chairperson, to be brought to the Board of Trustees.

Upon receiving a request for appeal, the Board of Trustees shall evaluate the material under the Collection Development & Maintenance Policy and will:

- A. consult with (i) the Library Director; (ii) the State Librarian or the State Librarian's designee; (iii) a representative of the cooperating library service unit, as defined in section 11-9e of the general statutes; (iv) the President of the Connecticut Library Association or the President's designee; and (v) the President of the Association of Connecticut Library Boards or the President's designee;
- B. deliberate on such request for reconsideration;
- C. provide a written statement of the reasons for the reconsideration or refusal to reconsider the library material; and
- D. provide any final decision that is contrary to the decision of the Library Director.

The Library Director is permitted to consolidate any requests for reconsideration of the same challenged library material.

A resource that has previously been reconsidered by request shall be exempt from additional requests for reconsideration for three years following being retained in the Library's collection despite a formal request for reconsideration. The Library Director will summarize the previous decision in response to any new request for reconsideration that meets the other requirements of this Policy during that three-year time period.

The Library is prohibited by state statutes from removing, excluding, or censoring any book on the sole basis that an individual finds such book offensive.

Any Library Director, Librarian, or Library Staff of a public library who, in good faith, implements the policies described in this section shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding that results from such implementation.

Location

This policy will be housed and maintained on the Hagaman Library website: www.hagamanlibrary.org/policies. A copy is also maintained in the Director's Office. The Library neither approves nor disapproves of the views expressed in materials included in the collection.

Approved by the Hagaman Memorial Library Board of Trustees November 20, 2025.

APPENDIX A: The American Library Association Library Bill of Rights



The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, age, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. 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.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.
- VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019. Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

APPENDIX B: The American Library Association Freedom to Read Statement



The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights. We therefore affirm these propositions:



1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.
2. Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.
3. Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

4. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author. No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.
5. There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

6. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in



making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.

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 will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish 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. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

8. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the 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.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004



APPENDIX C: The American Library Association Freedom to View Statement

The **FREEDOM TO VIEW**, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council