



Materials Selection and Availability Policy

Purpose of the Library

The Gates Public Library exists to serve Gates residents of all ages and abilities. To that end, the library through its governing Board of Trustees and staff will constantly study the evolving town -- its needs, interests and concerns -- and will keep pace with the changing community. The library recognizes that Gates is also part of many larger communities, and thus the library should reflect the variety of concerns in the county, state, and beyond.

The public library is the "University of the People," the public institution dedicated to promoting the self-education of each person. This library, in addition, recognizes the value of reading as an essential skill for each person to master. Accordingly, we strive to promote increased reading among all ages and abilities.

The library acknowledges it has a major role in the development of a well-informed electorate, which is essential to a viable democracy. The library also values free inquiry, and for that reason, affirms its support of the following American Library Association documents: The Library Bill of Rights, The Freedom to Read statement, the Policy of the Confidentiality of Library Records, and the Freedom to View statement (see Appendices 2-5).

Selection of Materials

1. Scope of Materials Selected

Materials -- both physical and digital -- selected for the library collection will be consistent with the above purpose of the library. Recognizing that the effectiveness of our library is measured by the number of Gates residents making use of the library, materials of whatever type -- printed, recorded, visual -- will be chosen to maximize such use. As new types of materials are developed, the library should be aware of changing trends and gradually include such new developments as patron interest increases.

The library strives to provide a comprehensive collection within limitations of budget and space. The depth and breadth of the library collection should reflect a corresponding interest by library patrons. The library must balance short-lived interests against long-term concerns, and see that neither is slighted.

Because the library strives to readily supply needed materials, there should be a supply of requested items sufficient enough to make the library a dependable source most of the time. Thus within space and budgetary restrictions, the library will duplicate items as deemed necessary by public use.

2. Responsibility for Selection

Administration of the selection process rests with the Library Director. Responsibility for the actual selection of materials may be delegated by the Director to staff librarians.

The procedure for selection should be careful and orderly, with each item selected to be weighed in its entirety for what it brings to the collection.

3. Criteria for Selection

All items selected should meet at least one of the following criteria, and preferably more:

- A. Quality of content in comparison with other published materials of the same subject, as evidenced in reviewing media or by a librarian's examination of the material.
- B. Competent representation of important county, state, national or world concerns.
- C. Popularity of the subject or title as demonstrated by public requests from patrons, whether over a short or long time span.
- D. In considering the above criteria, the librarians will also take into account both physical durability and cost of the material.

Selection and Removal Issues

The library recognizes the need for further clarification of the following areas:

1. Gifts

While the library generally wishes to encourage donations of materials in good physical shape, and of public interest, the library must apply the same criteria to gifts as are applied to purchased materials. The judgment of the librarians determines what is to be done with any gifts. The Library Board also allows librarians to refuse any and all donations on the spot, or to dispose of the same in accordance with procedures established by the Library Director.

2. School Curriculum Requests

The primary responsibility for such needs rests with each school to fund and adequately stock its own school library. However, the library recognizes that it plays an important supplementary role in supporting school curricula. While our library can and does provide materials that are useful in school assignments, our primary role is to provide materials that satisfy the recreational needs and concerns of school-age people. The library recognizes that young people have a life and a mind separate from their schoolwork, just as adults have interests and concerns separate from their employment.

3. Weeding the Collection

Maintenance of an up-to-date, attractive, currently useful collection is essential to viable library service. The same librarians who select what is added to the collection are also responsible for weeding the collection. Weeding is defined as a constant discarding -- with replacement as needed -- of outdated, worn-out, or no longer useful materials.

Such discarded materials are disposed of in accordance with the comptroller's opinions governing items purchased with public monies. Gift items, once processed and added to the collection, are treated as if they had been bought with public monies.

4. Controversial Materials

The library realizes that the world is filled with many controversies. Thus the library, in mirroring the world, will add materials to its collection that may be controversial. The library provides a procedure (see section "Questions on Adherence to this Policy") for the public to voice their concerns.

However, if a criticized item is deemed by the Library Board to have been properly selected by the terms of this policy, public use of it shall not be denied or abridged in any way. An item is evaluated as a whole work, not by detached excerpts. An item is not evaluated as to the rightness or wrongness of the author's views, as that would allow personal opinion sway over the free marketplace of ideas which the library represents.

5. Local History

Because this is the only library serving the entire town of Gates, the library accepts a special obligation to maintain as comprehensive a collection, as space and money allow, of materials related to Gates history and heritage.

Availability of materials

The library recognizes the best and most carefully selected materials serve little purpose if they are not easily available. Although establishment of circulation procedures is an administrative decision made by the Library Director, the Library Board urges adoption of circulation procedures that are liberal and flexible enough that most people can use library materials conveniently. At the same time, conditions of circulation for home use must be established which allow fair and equitable access for the widest possible number of library users.

- A. The library strives to have a collection large enough that there are few, if any limitations on the number of items each individual may borrow.
- B. Resources that are used daily in the library, or which are costly, rare, fragile, or prone to theft or mutilation may be exempted from home use by the decision of the library's professional staff.
- C. Individuals who chronically misuse the library by their withholding of library materials may be refused library service, as determined by the Library Director.
- D. The Library Board recognizes that a major part of making materials available to the public includes maintaining a sufficient number of skilled personnel on duty to help the public locate materials. The library should be physically arranged to allow for as much self-service as possible. However, it is essential that a professional librarian be available any hour the library is open to serve the public, with enough support staff that the librarian's time is not occupied with routine circulation operations.

Questions on Adherence to this Policy

Should a patron question any aspect of this policy, he or she should be referred to the Library Director for discussion. The Director will report the question to the Board at the next board meeting.

Requests for reevaluation of specific material may be made only by Gates residents and shall be referred to the Director. The resident will be advised to obtain a "Request for Reconsideration of Library Resource" form (see Appendix 1)." This form must be filled out in its entirety and signed by the resident requesting the action. The Director will investigate the complaint and provide a written response to the request within 30 days. The decision by the Director may be appealed to the Board of Trustees, which may be heard during a regular meeting at a time designated by the Board for public expression. Materials that have been challenged will not be removed from the collection prior to a final decision by the Board of Trustees.

Revised: June 22, 1988

Revised: February 19, 2014

Revised: September 20, 2023

Revised: June 26, 2024

Revised: September 25, 2024

Appendix 1



Request for Reconsideration of Library Resource

(For books or other printed materials, audiovisual/downloadable items, or programs presented at the Library)

Title:

Author:

Publisher:

Book: Periodical: DVD/Blu-Ray: CD: Audiobook: eBook: Other:

OR

Program Name:

Program Presenter:

Program Date:

Your Name:

Address:

City: State: Zip: Phone:

Do you represent: Yourself: An Organization/Group:

Organization/Group Name:

1. What do you object to in the work or program? Please be specific and cite pages or examples where possible.

2. Did you read/view/listen to the entire work, or attend the entire program? ____ If not, which sections did you skip, and why?

3. What do you feel might be the impact of reading/viewing/listening to this material, or attending this program, by the public at large, and why?

4. For what age group would you recommend this material or program?

5. What do you believe is the theme of this material or program?

6. For books or other material, please cite at least two judgments of this work by literary or other established critics.

7. What would you like the library to do with this material or program? Please explain.

8. In its place, what material or program would you recommend which would convey as valuable a perspective of the subject matter?

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Thank You

Revised form approved by Library Board: 9/25/24

Appendix 2

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, 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 3

The Freedom to Read

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.*

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.

2. *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.

3. *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.

4. *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.

5. *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.

6. *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.

7. *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.

A Joint Statement by:

[American Library Association](#)
[Association of American Publishers](#)

Subsequently endorsed by:

[American Booksellers for Free Expression](#)
[The Association of American University Presses](#)
[The Children's Book Council](#)
[Freedom to Read Foundation](#)
[National Association of College Stores](#)
[National Coalition Against Censorship](#)
[National Council of Teachers of English](#)

The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

Appendix 4

Policy on Confidentiality of Library Records

The Council of the American Library Association strongly recommends that the responsible officers of each library, cooperative system, and consortium in the United States:

1. Formally adopt a policy that specifically recognizes its circulation records and other records identifying the names of library users to be confidential. (See also [ALA Code of Ethics](#), Article III, "We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received, and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted" and [Privacy: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#).)
2. Advise all librarians and library employees that such records shall not be made available to any agency of state, federal, or local government except pursuant to such process, order or subpoena as may be authorized under the authority of, and pursuant to, federal, state, or local law relating to civil, criminal, or administrative discovery procedures or legislative investigative power.
3. Resist the issuance of enforcement of any such process, order, or subpoena until such time as a proper showing of good cause has been made in a court of competent jurisdiction.¹

¹Note: Point 3, above, means that upon receipt of such process, order, or subpoena, the library's officers will consult with their legal counsel to determine if such process, order, or subpoena is in proper form and if there is a showing of good cause for its issuance; if the process, order, or subpoena is not in proper form or if good cause has not been shown, they will insist that such defects be cured.

Adopted January 20, 1971, by the ALA Council; amended July 4, 1975; July 2, 1986.

Appendix 5

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