



Vermont Library Freedom to Read Statement

Intellectual freedom is the right of library users to read, seek information, and speak freely as guaranteed by the First Amendment. Intellectual freedom is one of the core values of the library profession and a basic right in our democratic society; it promotes access to information and guides the defense against censorship.

In 1953, the American Library Association and the Association of American Publishers jointly released the *Freedom to Read Statement*. This statement reminded us that, "The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack" (ALA, 2004). Now, seventy years later, a resurgence of attacks on the freedom to read again threatens our democracy. Calls for book bans, the adoption of unconstitutional legislation, and campaigns to criminalize librarians for distributing materials protected by the First Amendment threaten our fundamental liberties.

Vermont librarians are joining together to emphatically reaffirm their commitment to the values expressed in the American Library Association's intellectual freedom documents, including *The Freedom to Read Statement*. We believe all Vermonters deserve free access to materials that function as windows and mirrors, both reflecting individuals' experiences and providing expanded, diverse views of the world (Bishop, 1990). We also believe that people are only truly free when they can read freely.

Jointly issued by the governing boards of the Vermont School Library Association and the Vermont Library Association, January 2024.

REFERENCES

American Library Association. "The Freedom To Read Statement." ALA Advocacy, 2004, <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>.

Bishop, Rudine Simms. "Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors." *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1990.