



LEADING THE ADVANCEMENT OF ALL
MICHIGAN LIBRARIES THROUGH ADVOCACY,
EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Libraries fill a role in upholding rights that are guaranteed by the First Amendment of the United States and central to any functioning democracy: the rights of citizens to read, seek information, and speak freely. In the spirit of that role, we owe it to every community member to provide material of interest to them on our library shelves.

Across our nation, at school and public library board meetings, we are witnessing an unprecedented uptick in the number of book challenges, most targeting works engaging with concepts of race and gender. Libraries recognize that parents or guardians have the right and responsibility to make decisions about what materials are suitable for their own families. And we also stand united in our belief that no one has the right to make rules restricting what other people read, or to make decisions for other families.

The presence of any reading materials in a library collection does not imply endorsement of the ideas expressed in those materials. The library is simply doing its job to provide a wide variety of views and expressions—if the library “endorses” anything, it is your right to access a broad selection of materials.

As champions of access, the Michigan Library Association is proud of the hard work being performed by trained and certified librarians across Michigan. They are committed to curating collections that allow every person to see themselves in the books and resources their libraries provide, choosing a broad range of subject matter that reflect diverse experiences. This is a core tenant of librarianship and one that helps ensure America lives up to its constitutional promise to protect intellectual freedom.

Key findings from a March 2022 study conducted by Hart Research Associates and North Star Opinion Research on behalf of the American Library Association found that large majorities of voters (71%) oppose efforts to have books removed from their local public libraries, including a majority of Democrats (75%), independents (58%), and Republicans (70%). Most voters and parents hold librarians in high regard, have confidence in their local libraries to make good decisions about what books to include in their collections, and agree that libraries in their communities do a good job offering books that represent a variety of viewpoints.

In early May, MIRightToRead.com was launched to bring focus to the right to read for all Michiganders. We urge parents, students, teachers, librarians, and anyone who supports intellectual freedom to visit the website and join the growing coalition.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ryan Wieber'.

Ryan Wieber
President, Michigan Library Association
Kalamazoo

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Deborah E. Mikula'.

Deborah E. Mikula
Executive Director, Michigan Library Association
Lansing

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Dillon Geshel'.

Dillon Geshel
Intellectual Freedom Task Force Chair, Michigan
Library Association
Marquette