



HAYWARD

LIBRARY COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS

Priscilla Banks
Carl Gorringer
Shonda Goward
Sofy Navarro
Anika Patterson
Suresh Sangiah
Kelly Sullivan
Andrea Wong

March 22, 2022

Hayward City Council
% Hayward City Clerk's Office
777 B Street
Hayward, CA 94541

Re: Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read & Freedom to View

Dear Members of the Hayward City Council,

Around the country, parents, activists, school board officials, and lawmakers have been challenging books at a pace not seen in decades.¹ In a preliminary report, the American Library Association indicated that they received an “unprecedented” 330 reports of book challenges—each of which can include multiple books—in Fall 2021. There have even been efforts to press criminal charges against school and public librarians. The rise in book bans points to a growing—and disturbing—movement by certain groups to use local and state governance to control teachers and public libraries; limit what children learn about American culture, society, and history; and constrain expression and ideas.

On February 28, 2022, the Library Commission unanimously affirmed its support for the Hayward Public Library's commitment to intellectual freedom by endorsing these three statements from the American Library Association, summarized thusly:

- **Library Bill of Rights:**
 - 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 the responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- **The Freedom to Read Statement:** “The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in

¹ Elizabeth A. Harris and Alexandra Alter, January 30, 2022, “Book Ban Efforts Spread Across the U.S.”, [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com)



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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.’”

- **The 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 of the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place of censorship of any medium of expression.” This statement affirms the principle “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.”

We respectfully ask the City Council to join us in showing support for the right of Hayward residents to have free and unfettered access to the information and materials they need through your endorsement of the Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read Statement, and Freedom to View Statement.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Hayward Library Commissioners

CC Jayanti Addleman