



Statement in Response to Proposed “Parental Rights” Legislation

Library Association of Alberta

Approved February 2024

The Library Association of Alberta upholds the universal principles of intellectual freedom as defined by the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. As library professionals, we are committed to free and equitable access to information for all Albertans, including children, and we oppose any efforts to suppress knowledge.

On February 1, 2024, Alberta Premier Danielle Smith announced that her government will introduce legislation to restrict gender-affirming healthcare for youth and to require government approval of all third-party teaching materials on gender identity, sexual orientation, and sexuality in Alberta schools. This legislation aims to censor information on sexuality and LGBTQIA2+ perspectives and experiences, rendering educators unable to provide inclusive education on these essential topics. It also renders school libraries unable to provide information and resources that reflect the diversity of Canadian and Albertan experiences. This legislation would deny Alberta’s youth access to information and knowledge crucial to their understanding of their world, their peers, and themselves.

School library and classroom resources are evaluated and selected by trained educators and librarians within the context of established and researched guidelines. These guidelines uphold the universal principles of intellectual freedom as guaranteed to all Canadians, including children, in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Additional review and approval by the government is unnecessary, inefficient, and in violation of the principles of intellectual freedom that ensure our children have access to rich and diverse materials that offer them a full range of knowledge, ideas and opinions.

The LAA pledges to join with library workers, educators, and provincial and federal library associations to oppose any legislation that would censor information resources, curriculum, or programs addressing sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity or LGBTQIA2+ existences and experiences. We call on the provincial government and Premier Smith to uphold the values of intellectual freedom that are essential to a democratic society and renounce plans to introduce legislation that would embed censorship in Alberta’s classrooms and schools.