



Date: September 1, 2023

RE: **VALE Statement Against Censorship and in Support of New Jersey School and Public Librarians**

VALE would like to express our deep concern over a growing number of organized attempts of censorship and suppression in schools and libraries in New Jersey (NJ) and across the country. Many of these attacks are targeting materials and programs that address race, racism, sexuality, and gender identity and expression that will have disparate impacts on schoolchildren across NJ and the nation.

VALE opposes any efforts to censor books in U.S. schools and libraries, as well as initiatives to censor resources addressing race, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation themes. Any such efforts violate students' first amendment rights and the ability to access and obtain a quality education.

VALE strongly affirms the American Library Association's [Library Bill of Rights](#) and [Freedom to Read Statement](#), first published in 1953. Libraries provide access to books and other library resources and services for the interest, information, education, and enlightenment of all people within the communities they serve. Materials are not excluded because of their origin, background, or the views of those contributing to their creation.

Library staff are trained to curate collections that are designed to be inclusive. Information service providers are guided by the [tenets of intellectual freedom](#) and by ethical responsibilities to uphold the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America. Through careful consideration and rigorous training, librarians and library workers are equipped to make selection decisions that represent a balance of the spectrum of knowledge.

VALE acknowledges the right and responsibility of parents and guardians to guide the reading choices of their children. Such rights should not in any way inhibit the rights of others to read or view any materials of their choosing.

VALE rejects past, current, and future efforts to remove materials from the reach of any reader. Concerted efforts by groups who disavow racial equity, self-determination, and/or gender identity and expression undermine intellectual freedom. Such efforts also inhibit knowledge and place barriers to learning.

VALE stands alongside the New Jersey Library Association, the New Jersey Association of School Librarians, the American Library Association, and other organizations that support the freedom to read. In addition, VALE stands in support of New Jersey's library workers, community members, and students, who demonstrate daily courage as champions of the right to an uninhibited freedom to read and the use of equitable reconsideration policies, and collections with diverse representation.

VALE subsequently endorses the following statements:

- [NJASL Position Statement on Censorship in School Libraries](#)
- [ALA Statement on Book Censorship](#)
- [NCAC Statement on Censorship](#)
- [Statement from NJ DCR and NJ DOE on School-Based Anti-Bias Initiatives and the Law Against Discrimination](#)

American Library Association. (2023). "Toolkit." *Unite Against Book Bans*. Retrieved on July 31, 2023, from <https://uniteagainstbookbans.org/toolkit/>.

This statement by VALE is endorsed by:

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