



Western Sullivan Public Library

Board of Trustees Statement on Materials Challenges

Western Sullivan Public Library is dedicated to providing a welcoming environment in which materials and services support and enhance the educational, artistic, professional, personal, and recreational needs and interests of the community. But deeper than our own Library's mission is the mission of public libraries writ large, and their importance in safeguarding our democracy.

The freedom to read is a crucial right, and the cornerstone of the public library's role in upholding a just and equitable society. Likewise, intellectual freedom - defined by the American Library Association (ALA) as "*the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction*" - is essential to a well-informed citizenry with agency to explore ideas and make decisions.

The ALA defines a materials challenge as "*an attempt to remove or restrict materials, based upon the objections of a person or group.*" The ALA also notes that "*challenges do not simply involve a person expressing a point of view; rather, they are an attempt to remove material from the curriculum or library, thereby restricting the access of others.*"

Western Sullivan Public Library is a place to satisfy curiosity, be inspired, and connect with others. We recognize that one person's interests may be vastly different from another's. Indeed, that is what makes our diverse community so special. Even the best-intentioned of challenges opens the door to another challenge: perhaps one that may shrink someone's worldview, invalidate someone's deeply-held beliefs, diminish someone's identity or self-worth, or even impinge upon the freedom of the initial challenger.

The presence of a particular book, periodical or media offering in the Library's collection does not imply endorsement of the ideas expressed in those materials. As your neighborhood library and partner in supporting an informed and intellectually-curious community, Western Sullivan Public Library serves as a neutral provider of information from all points of view. Its only endorsement is your right, as a member of this community, to have access to a wide range of reading, listening and viewing materials.

Western Sullivan Public Library has a unique ability to bring people of all ages and backgrounds together around common goals: exploration and discovery, information, personal development and community connection. We want everyone who comes to the Library to see themselves in its offerings, and we remain committed to providing free, equitable, and confidential access to information to everyone in our community.