

**LIVINGSTON FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY
RESOLUTION 24-05**

**RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION'S
FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT AND DECLARING THE LIVINGSTON
PUBLIC LIBRARY AS A BOOK SANCTUARY**

WHEREAS, the freedom to read is a human right, constitutionally protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, and individuals have the right to free inquiry and the equally important right to form their own opinions; and

WHEREAS, Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”; and

WHEREAS, books do not require readers to agree with topics or themes but instead allow readers to explore and engage with differing perspectives to form and inform their own views; and

WHEREAS, over the last several years, there has been a significant increase in censorship activities in the United States resulting in books being removed from library shelves and schools; and

WHEREAS, book bans often seek to impose restrictions on students and families based on the political, ideological, or cultural preferences of the individuals calling for book bans; and

WHEREAS, book bans have multifaceted, harmful consequences on—

- (A) students who have a right to access a diverse range of stories and perspectives;
- (B) students from historically marginalized backgrounds, whose communities are often underrepresented in literature;
- (C) educators and librarians who are operating in some states in an increasingly punitive and surveillance-oriented environment, which has a chilling effect on teaching and learning;
- (D) the authors whose works are being targeted; and

(E) parents who want to raise children who can attend schools and use libraries, which remain open to and encourage curiosity, discovery, and the freedom to read; and

WHEREAS, classic and award-winning literature and books, which have been part of school curricula for decades, have been challenged, removed from libraries pending review, or outright banned from schools; and

WHEREAS, books, particularly those written by and about outsiders, newcomers, and people from marginalized backgrounds, are facing a heightened risk of being banned; and

WHEREAS, numerous books referring to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and more (“LGBTQ+”) themes or with LGBTQ+ characters have been banned in the United States this year, including children’s books, which recognize the equal humanity and dignity of all persons, despite our differences; and

WHEREAS, numerous books, both fiction and nonfiction, with protagonists of color or prominent secondary characters of color have been banned in some states in the United States, particularly in recent years; and

WHEREAS, numerous bills have been introduced in states across the country that would restrict books and curricula on race and gender in schools; and

WHEREAS, the Livingston Library Board of Trustees declare their opposition to the banning of books in any form; and

WHEREAS, the Livingston Public Library previously adopted the Library Bill of Rights and supports the freedom to read, including the adoption of the American Library Association’s Freedom to Read Statement; and

WHEREAS, the Livingston Public Library has a materials selection process that is fair, deliberative, equitable, and accessible to the public, as outlined in its “Collection Development Policy” adopted by the Library Board of Trustees on January 13, 2021, and revised on June 14th, 2022.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Livingston Public Library Board of Trustees as follows:

- [Adoption of American Library Association’s Freedom to Read Statement](#) - The Livingston Public Library Board of Trustees supports and adopts the American Library Association’s “Freedom to Read Statement,” attached hereto and incorporated by reference into this Resolution; and
- **Book Sanctuary Declaration** - The Livingston Public Library Board of Trustees declares that the Livingston Public Library is a book sanctuary. As a book sanctuary, the Library shall be a place where: (1) people can borrow and read challenged books; (2) endangered books are accessible to everyone; (3) we

host book talks, story times, and other events about banned and challenged books; and (4) people can be educated about the history of book banning and burning.

- Book Sanctuary Actions - The Livingston Public Library encourages community members to do the following: (1) host and join in-person or virtual banned book clubs and encourage critical discussion of censored stories, starting with Black, Indigenous, People of Color (“BIPOC”) and LGBTQ+ stories that are most often challenged; (2) collect and protect endangered books; (3) lend endangered books to friends and neighbors; and (4) amplify individual voices on social media with #TheBookSanctuary.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF,

Laurence Bergmann 3/12/24
 Laurence Bergmann, Co-President Date

Peggy Slatkin 3/12/24
 Peggy Slatkin, Co-President Date

ROLL CALL	Yes	No	Abstain or absent		Yes	No	Abstain or absent
Peggy Slatkin	✓			Iris Leopold	✓		
Cynthia Waller Vallario	✓			Mayor Al Anthony	✓		
Yitao Yu	✓			Nora Lichtenstein	✓		
Barbara Bye	✓			Laurence Bergmann	✓		
Sudeep Amin	✓						