



## **POLICY AGAINST CENSORSHIP AND BOOK BANS**

The Township of Washington Public Library believes that reading is a foundational skill essential for critical thinking, future learning and an exercise in democratic freedom; that books and other materials are tools for understanding complex issues; that libraries provide access to books and other materials that offer lessons to readers of all ages and expand our understanding of people with different backgrounds, ideas and beliefs.

The Library believes that limiting access to books and other materials does not protect people from life's complex and challenging issues. The Library believes that all people deserve to see themselves reflected in a library's collection.

Our certified Librarians are professionals trained to not impose their own thoughts and opinions as to which ideas are right, but instead to make knowledge and ideas available so that people have the freedom to choose what to read, view or listen to for themselves.

We believe that removing and banning books and other materials from public libraries represents a loss of liberty, a step toward censorship, and an erosion of the freedom of expression. Book bans by virtue of their exclusionary nature limit choices and thereby harm communities and have long lasting effects on our society.

The Trustees of the Free Public Library of the Township of Washington issue the following statement: Individuals should be trusted to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. Further, people should not be making decisions for other people about what they read. We are united against book bans.

We, the Trustees of the Township of Washington Public Library, will act to protect the rights of everyone to access a variety of books and other materials.

The Trustees of the Free Public Library of the Township of Washington hereby designates the Township of Washington Public Library as a book sanctuary.

The Trustees of the Free Public Library of the Township of Washington support and adopt the American Library Association's "Freedom to Read Statement," which can be found on the Library website.

As a book sanctuary, the Library shall be a place where:

- People can borrow and read challenged books;
- Endangered books are accessible to everyone;
- Book talks, programs and events that include banned and challenged books can be held;
- People can be educated about the history of book banning and burning.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees November 20, 2023