

 **This is genius.**

@ERICAMELKO.BSKY

.SOCIAL, in response to "The Wedding Dress Whisperer" (Mar./Apr., p. 48)

Legislation Misinformation

Recent mainstream media articles about the groundbreaking Illinois Public Act 103, also known as the anti-book banning law, have contained misleading information and elevated erroneous public perceptions, contributing to misinformation about libraries and censorship issues.




The law (bit.ly/IL103) helps libraries with book ban policies ensure local control and guards against censorship and malicious

actors seeking to ban books and erase BIPOC and LGBTQ+ identities. The extreme right has sought to turn the narrative on its head by framing the law as "giving up local control." The conservative Freedom Caucus of the Illinois legislature reacted by using a tired dog whistle, calling ALA and such laws "woke." At least some public school officials seem to have believed the propaganda and have turned down state grants rather than comply with the law.

The Illinois secretary of state put this law in place with the legislature's support as a direct response to abusive, coordinated attacks on libraries. Public Act 103 codifies local control by requiring a library system or school to implement policies that prohibit book banning and clearly state procedures for challenging materials. It is important to refute misinformation spread by the book banners and their allies. Those who push this misinformation don't really want

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local control; they want the ability to ban books. We must correct biased news stories, inform local officials of the truth, and challenge leaders who support censorship. We must vocally support laws like Public Act 103 as welcome tools to help safeguard the freedom to read.

Tara Donnelly
Chicago

Stance on Statement

For several years, the American Library Association (ALA) has attached this statement to press releases: "For more than 140 years, the ALA has been the trusted voice for academic, public, school, government, and special libraries, advocating for the profession and the library's role in enhancing learning and ensuring access to information for all."

Based on research I've conducted in the past half-century, I can say with certainty that this statement is simply not true.

In World War I, many libraries pulled German books off their shelves; some even burned them. In the 1950s, the Librarian of Congress sought to purge his workforce of gay librarians. ALA said nothing about either. And my latest book, *In Silence or Indifference: Racism and Jim Crow Segregated Public School Libraries* (University Press of Mississippi, 2024), posits that before 1974, ALA ignored the racism experienced by Southern Black school librarians.

When I first saw the statement in 2021, I immediately wrote a letter to the editor

f How wonderful to have two experienced former Executive Board members and outstanding human beings in these roles—the Association is in great hands! 🍌❤️🍌

KAREN JOHNSON DOWNING, in response to ALA election results (The Scoop, Apr. 7)

(Nov./Dec. 2021, p. 6). Apparently, few people read my letter, because the statement now has a life of its own.

By continuing to use this statement, ALA insults the memory of librarians who in the past 140 years experienced racism, sexism, and homophobia, and to whom ALA offered no support, vocal or otherwise. It's way past time for ALA to stop distorting its own history.

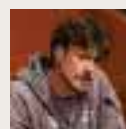
Wayne A. Wiegand
Walnut Creek, California

Editor's note: In January, ALA changed the statement mentioned above to: "For almost 150 years, ALA has provided resources to inspire library and information professionals to transform their communities through essential programs and services. The ALA serves academic, public, school, government, and special libraries, advocating for the profession and the library's role in enhancing learning and ensuring access to information for all."

What You're Reading

- 1 Sustaining for the Future** Leaders grapple with threats, from natural disasters to environmental racism. bit.ly/AL-Sustain
- 2 Censorship throughout the Centuries** A timeline of US book bans and the fight for intellectual freedom. bit.ly/AL-Centuries
- 3 No Questions Asked** Public libraries build no-return collections for addiction and mental health support. bit.ly/AL-NoQuestions

In Case You Missed It



Newsmaker: Chris Kluwe

Advocate, author, and former NFL athlete on protesting a MAGA plaque at his local library. bit.ly/AL-Kluwe



Newsmaker: Bob the Drag Queen

The comedian and reality TV personality discusses his new novel about Harriet Tubman. bit.ly/AL-Bob

Feds Curb Access to Border Library

US Department of Homeland Security issues new requirements for Canadians visiting the Haskell Free Library and Opera House. bit.ly/AL-Haskell

State of America's Libraries 2025 Report

This year's ALA report looks at censorship attempts, artificial intelligence, and sustainability in US libraries. bit.ly/SOAL-25

Coming Soon

Check The Scoop for our team coverage of ALA's **2025 Annual Conference and Exhibition**, to be held June 26–30 in Philadelphia.