

## RESOLUTION

### A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS'S FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT AND DECLARING THE VILLAGE OF OAK PARK AS A BOOK SANCTUARY COMMUNITY

**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 all 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 with a chilling effect on teaching and learning;
- (D) the authors whose works are being targeted; and
- (E) parents who want to raise students in schools that remain open to curiosity, discovery, and the freedom to read; and

**WHEREAS**, classic and award-winning literature and books that have been part of school curricula for decades have been challenged, removed from libraries pending review, or outright banned from schools, including “Brave New World” by Aldous Huxley, “The Handmaid’s Tale” by Margaret Atwood, “Anne Frank’s Diary: The Graphic Adaptation”, “Their Eyes Were Watching God” by Zora Neale Hurston, and “To Kill a Mockingbird” by Harper Lee; and

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

**WHEREAS**, numerous books referring to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and plus (“LGBTQ+”) themes or with LGBTQ+ characters have been banned in the United States this year, including children’s books such as “Families, Families, Families!” and “All Are Welcome”, 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 the United States, including “Ruby Bridges Goes to School: My True Story,” “Martin Luther King, Jr. and the March on Washington”, “Thank You, Jackie Robinson”, “Malala: A Hero For All”, “Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story”, “Hair Love”, “Good Trouble: Lessons from the Civil Rights Playbook”, and “We Are All Born Free: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Pictures”; and

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

**WHEREAS**, the Village President and the Board of Trustees declare their opposition to the banning of books in any form; and

**WHEREAS**, the Village President and the Board of Trustees applauds and supports the recent action by the Illinois General Assembly and Illinois Governor JB Pritzker in enacting Public Act 103-0100 on June 12, 2023 which takes effect on January 1, 2024 and declares it to be the “policy of the State to encourage and protect the freedom of libraries and library systems to acquire materials without external limitation and to be protected against attempts to ban, remove, or otherwise restrict access to books or other materials;” and

**WHEREAS**, Public Act 103-0100 further provides that “[i]n order to be eligible for State grants, a library or library system shall adopt the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights that indicates materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval or, in the alternative, develop a written statement prohibiting the practice of banning books or other materials within the library or library system;” and

**WHEREAS**, the Oak Park Public Library previously adopted the Library Bill of Rights and has taken other actions to support the freedom to read in the Village, including the adoption of the American Library Association’s Freedom to Read Statement; and

**WHEREAS**, the Village of Oak Park Public Library has a “materials selection policy” process that is fair, deliberative, equitable, and accessible to the public as set forth in its “Resolution in Support of Library Staff, Collections and Programming” adopted by the Board of Library Trustees on October 6, 2022; and

**WHEREAS**, Village President and the Board of Trustees applauds and supports these actions taken by the Oak Park Public Library.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Oak Park, Illinois, in the exercise of their home rule powers, as follows:

**Section 1. Recitals Incorporated.** The above recitals are incorporated herein as though fully set forth.

**Section 2. Adoption of American Library Association’s Freedom to Read Statement.** The Village President and the Board of Trustees support and adopt the American Library Association’s “Freedom to Read Statement,” attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

**Section 3. Book Sanctuary Declaration.** The Village President and Board of Trustees declare that the Village is a book sanctuary community and the Village shall not provide support, financial or otherwise, to any business, organization or governmental entity that supports or accomplishes the banning of books in any manner as set forth in this Resolution and in the Freedom to Read Statement.

**Section 4. Book Sanctuary Community.** As a book sanctuary community, the Village shall be a place where everyone can: (1) borrow and read challenged books; (2) make endangered books accessible to everyone; (3) host book talks, story times, and other events about banned and challenged books; and (4) educate others on the history of book banning and burning.

**Section 5. Book Sanctuary Actions.** The Village supports the efforts of the Oak Park Public Library to advance and support Oak Park as being a book sanctuary Village and call upon community members to do the following: (1) host and join in-person or virtual banned book clubs to encourage critical discussion of censored stories, starting with Black, Indigenous, People of Color (“BIPOC”) and LGBTQ+ stories that are most often challenged; (2) lending banned books friends and neighbors; (3) using local Little Free Libraries as book sanctuaries, adding banned books as a way to support the freedom to read; (4) facilitating a book drive for banned and challenged books and donating books to local community centers, including the Friends of the Oak Park Public Library, for distribution at Little Free Libraries in the community; (5) hosting story times with inclusive characters that reflect the diversity of our world; and (6) amplifying individual voices on social media with #TheBookSanctuary.

**Section 6. Severability and Repeal of Inconsistent Ordinances, Resolutions and Motions.** If any section, paragraph, clause or provision of this Resolution shall be held invalid, the invalidity thereof shall not affect any of the other provisions of this Resolution. All ordinances, resolutions and motion in conflict herewith are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict.

**Section 7. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall be in full force and effect immediately after its passage and publication as provided by law.

**ADOPTED** this 20<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2023 pursuant to a roll call vote as follows:

Voting	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
President Scaman				
Trustee Buchanan				
Trustee Enyia				
Trustee Parakkat				
Trustee Robinson				
Trustee Straw				
Trustee Wesley				

**APPROVED** this 20<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2023.

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Vicki Scaman, Village President

**ATTEST**

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Christina M. Waters, Village Clerk