



Canadian Federation of Library Associations
Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques

January 17th 2024

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA) is concerned with a pattern of censorship attempts that are increasingly evident in Canadian schools and public libraries. CFLA is the united voice of Canada's libraries. We work to influence public policy, advance library excellence, and raise the visibility of libraries in Canada to advance our national intellectual, social, economic, and cultural success. As an organization committed to the fundamental principles of intellectual freedom, we find these developments not only troubling but also antithetical to the values that we, as a nation, hold dear.

Libraries in Canada serve as bastions of free expression and access to information. They play a critical role in upholding Canadians' rights as enshrined under Section 2(b) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which states: "Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms: [...] (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication." This clause underpins the very essence of our democratic society, ensuring that every individual has the liberty to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds.

The recent instances of censorship, which seek to restrict access to diverse perspectives and ideas in our educational and public institutions, are a direct challenge to these freedoms. These actions not only undermine the principles of intellectual freedom but also impede the ability of libraries to serve their communities effectively.

We urge the Government of Canada to take a firm stand in defending and upholding the rights guaranteed under Section 2(b) of the Charter. These rights must be protected not just in principle but in practice, across all provinces and territories. We ask for your commitment through a public statement expressing that these fundamental freedoms shall not be eroded but robustly defended, allowing Canadians to continue to benefit from the rich tapestry of ideas and information that our libraries provide.

The CFLA stands ready to work collaboratively with the government to address these challenges. Together, we can ensure that the foundational values of intellectual freedom continue to be a cornerstone of Canadian society.

Sincerely,

Canadian Federation of Library Associations-Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques
(CFLA-FCAB)