

Ex Libris Advocacy

The Ex Libris Association advocates on issues that affect the library, archival, and related fields. ELA seeks to support libraries of all types that provide access to information and services that people need.

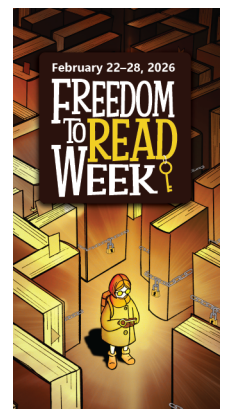
When appropriate, ELA actively works with national and provincial associations to promote and protect the interests and welfare of libraries and information professionals that deliver services for their respective communities.

In view of its diverse membership base, ELA will engage with many voices representing all library sectors.

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

ELA supports the work of the Canadian Federation of Library Associations/Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques, library associations, archival and other organizations across Canada and the United States in affirming the freedom to read, express, share, and access ideas and viewpoints. Intellectual Freedom is a fundamental right.

ELA considers it essential that libraries and archives engage in the development of policies, collections, displays, programs, and promotional activities that ensure the communities they serve are defended against infringements to intellectual freedom, the right to free and confidential access to information, and the right to privacy protection.



ELA endorses the CFLA/FCAB statement on [Intellectual Freedom and Libraries](#).

From time to time, ELA issues statements on central matters concerning libraries, archives, and information services. Advocating for these organizations is part of ELA's important work.

APRIL 2026: ELA POSITION STATEMENT ON ALBERTA BILL 28 TO INTRODUCE LIBRARY RESTRICTIONS

ELA is deeply concerned about the Alberta government's overreach in this bill, which allows government inspectors and officials to overrule the local authority of library directors, library boards, and local governments to determine what is appropriate for their communities regarding library materials, processes, and policies. Such measures would undermine a trusted system that Albertan library users rely on and value. We strongly urge the withdrawal of the changes to the Libraries Act proposed in Bill 28.

Read the full statement on April 26th supporting the Library Association of Alberta and Coalition of Alberta Public Libraries [at this link](#).

APRIL 2026: STATEMENT ON THE ELIMINATION OF LIBRARIANS IN CANADA FEDERAL PENITENTIARIES

The Ex Libris Association of Canada is deeply concerned about the decision by Correctional Service Canada (CSC) to eliminate all librarian positions in federal penitentiaries across Canada. Coupled with its intention to end funding for the CEGEP education program serving incarcerated people in Quebec's federal institutions, this represents a sweeping and regressive dismantling of rehabilitative infrastructure within our prison system.

CSC librarians are trained educators and information specialists who curate collections, protect equitable access, support legal research and literacy, deliver programming, and ensure that the most marginalized individuals in CSC's custody can exercise their rights and pursue personal growth. There are at least 31 CSC librarians employed across 38 unique federal prison libraries who hold vital institutional knowledge — knowledge of security protocols, inmate learning needs, culturally appropriate collections, and trauma-informed service — that cannot simply be “absorbed” or replaced without consequence.

Read the full ELA statement on April 14th [at this link](#).

JULY 2025: ALBERTA SCHOOL BOOK RESTRICTIONS

In June, 2025, the ELA Advocacy Committee responded to the Province of Alberta's decision to diminish the role of trained educators and library professionals in determining the content of school library collections and in responding to challenges to that content. ELA joined other library associations in support of the Canadian School Libraries Statement on Alberta's Announcement Regarding Possible Book Bannings. The CSL statement emphasizing the need for professional input from educators and school librarians in the selection and management of school library resources is [at this link](#).

The Alberta Ministerial Order outlining the new standards for age-appropriate books was published in July, and detailed information on the government's school library standards engagement with the public is [at this link](#). The Library Association of Alberta has challenged the decision to issue the standards, noting that most survey respondents (40 to 60% in most cases) were content with the current selection processes. ELA has urged the government to meet with representatives of the Library Association of Alberta to discuss their concerns.

The ELA President's letter on July 28th about this matter, and the Alberta Minister's response are at the [ELA news and views site](#).

MAY 2025: HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY ROYAL CHARTER OF 1670

In May 2025, ELA sent a letter supporting calls from other library organizations urging the Canadian government to take immediate action to secure the HBC charter for the permanent collection of Library and Archives Canada. This important charter is a vital historical document that should be accessible to all Canadians.

The ELA letter is available [at this PDF link](#).

APRIL 2025: UNDERFUNDING OF ONTARIO COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

In April 2025, the President of ELA, David Harvey, forwarded a letter to the Ontario Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security about the Association's concerns regarding the underfunding of colleges and universities, specifically libraries. ELA strongly urged the government to provide (1) an emergency infusion of \$1.4 billion into college and college libraries; and (2) an additional \$1.34 billion annually to bring Ontario up to the national average for per-student funding.

The ELA letter is [at this link](#).

PREVIOUS ADVOCACY CONCERNS AND STATEMENTS

ELA has expressed various concerns and issued statements for many years. The ELA news and views site includes a number of earlier announcements and documentation [at this link](#).

STATEMENTS BY LEADING ORGANIZATIONS ON INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

American Library Association [Library Bill of Rights](#) adopted in 1939 and most recently amended in 2019.

International Federation of Library Associations [Libraries and Intellectual Freedom](#) statement adopted January 2007. [PDF download]

The Canadian Association of University Teachers [statement on academic freedom](#) adopted in 1977 and most recently approved in 2023.

CFLA/FCAB statement on [Third Party Use of Publicly Funded Library Meeting Rooms and Facilities](#). [PDF download]

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

[Centre for Free Expression](#), a non-partisan organization focused on freedom of expression at Toronto Metropolitan University. The Centre hosts the Canadian Library Challenges Database, a joint endeavour by CFLA/FCAB and the CFE to document challenges to Canadian library materials, programs, displays, and room rentals. CFE highlights events, issues, awards, and publishes insightful advice and guides as well as [promoting libraries and intellectual freedom](#).

[Freedom to Read Week](#). Library and Archives Canada, the Canadian Urban Libraries Council, the Ontario Library Association, and the Book and Periodical Council have joined to sponsor an annual event in February that encourages Canadians to reflect on and reaffirm their commitment to intellectual freedom. The Week celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2024.

Banned Books Week is an annual event in the United States that highlights the value of free and open access to information. The Week, held each October, is supported by a coalition of organizations dedicated to free expression: libraries, booksellers, publishers, journalists, authors, teachers, and many others.

[CFLA/FCAB Intellectual Freedom Toolkit](#). {PDF download}



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