

The Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism (FAIR) is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to advancing civil rights and liberties for all Americans, and promoting a common culture based on fairness, understanding and humanity.



FAIR Twin Cities applies FAIR's pro-human principles to the challenges, public policy questions and civic complexities facing Minnesota. We serve as a resource to Minnesota institutions, schools, businesses and citizens. We advocate for one human race, individual civil rights and liberties, and compassionate opposition to racism and intolerance that is rooted in dignity and our common humanity. We encourage use of FAIR materials and resources to anchor difficult discussions, find common ground and differentiate between good intentions and the real-world effects of proposals and positions.

FAIR Statement on...

Book Banning

FAIR believes that objective truth exists, that it is discoverable, and that inquiry must be untainted by any political or ideological agenda. The path toward discovering objective truth necessarily includes the exercise of free speech, open inquiry, and the free exchange of ideas.

Book-banning can take many forms, including efforts to remove books from public libraries and book sellers, efforts to pressure publishers not to publish certain books or authors, or efforts to de-platform unpopular authors. It also refers to efforts to remove books from school libraries, classrooms, or curricula. In general, book-banning must be understood as an effort to shut down the open sharing of a diversity of ideas.

FAIR opposes any form of banning or limiting books from public libraries as a form of censorship of ideas. We promote the neutrality and intellectual freedom of libraries —principles which are essential for fostering and maintaining public trust in these institutions.

Over time, libraries have often faced challenges to the ideas of neutrality and intellectual freedom. For example, content warnings—that is, marking materials as possibly offensive—are widely considered a form of censorship. According to the American Library Association (ALA),

It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous...The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It

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FAIR Twin Cities <https://www.fairforall.org/twin-cities/>

Email: twin-cities@fairforall.org

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presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

In affirming the Freedom to Read, the ALA upholds the value of “the written word [which] may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.”

FAIR opposes all forms of book-banning and broadly supports the freedom to read without interference or censorship.

Libraries in schools and classrooms, particularly in elementary schools, present a somewhat different issue. For these libraries, which are curated by educators, FAIR supports a partnership between parents/guardians and educators in determining whether books are age-appropriate for children based on their grade level. We believe that parents/guardians have the right to advocate for or against particular books being included in school and classroom libraries and curricula. Such decisions should not be made unilaterally and should result from meaningful and robust discussion among all parents/guardians and educators in the community.

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