



serve. advocate. connect.

April 29, 2022

Esteemed colleagues and advocates of freedom,

On April 28th, Governor Kemp signed several bills into law that will impact equitable access to information and learning for the students in Georgia. This is a direct attack on the freedoms of Georgians.

Georgia Library Media Association is committed to working with our state and local education entities, as well as school librarians in Georgia, to protect our students' equitable access to the materials they need to support their academic, social, and emotional growth as policies related to SB 226 and HB 1084 are developed.

Directly following the signing of these bills, President-Elect Amanda Lee addressed the media in a press conference. Her statements have now been shared across multiple platforms with WSBTV, Fox 5 News, and CNN. Nan Brown, Advocacy Co-Chair and GLMA's Intellectual Freedom Award winner for 2022, addressed the same concerns in an interview with 11Alive.

We are concerned about the short 7-day time frame for the reconsideration process, the move from the current committee process to a principal's decision, and lack of direction regarding multiple challenges and board audience, as well as the potential chilling effect on media specialists' purchase options. This will lead to 'soft-censorship' and fear of retribution among many teachers and school librarians.

A survey commissioned by the American Library Association in March 2022 showed a significant majority of voters and parents "hold librarians in high regard, have confidence in their local libraries to make good decisions about what books to include in their collections, and agree that libraries in their communities do a good job offering books that represent a variety of viewpoints." Local chapters of vocal national groups have offered very different opinions of school librarians (and teachers) to our elected officials, however. We hope our broader community will take a moment to contact their legislators in support of intellectual freedom and parents managing only reading choices for their own children.

So what can we do?

- Contact your local House Representative and Senator directly and explain that as a school librarian, educator, and/or parent you oppose any attempt at censorship such as HB 888, SB 226, or any other such attempt at restricting access to learning
- Make sure your selection policy and reconsideration policy are visible on your school library website
- Continue to speak up!

Thank you for all you do for your students and communities! Let's commit to work together to ensure we can continue our shared mission of empowering our students.

Warm regards,

Martha Bongiorno

President of Georgia Library Media Association

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martha Bongiorno". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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