

## **B.2.1.2**

### **(Old 53.1.2)**

**Note:** At the 2014 Annual Conference, the ALA Council amended the wording in Expurgation of Library Materials: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*. The policy abstract was not revised.

Adopted 1973, revised 1990, 2008, 2014. (See “Policy Reference File”: Expurgation of Library Materials: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*, revised, 2013–2014 ALA CD#19.10\_63014 - PDF, 7 pgs)

**Expurgation of Library Resources**  
An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*

Expurgating library resources is a violation of the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*. Expurgation as defined by this interpretation includes any deletion, excision, alteration, editing, or obliteration of any part of a library resource by administrators, employees, governing authorities, parent institutions (if any), or third party vendors when done for the purposes of censorship. Such action stands in violation of Articles I, II, and III of the *Library Bill of Rights*, which state that "Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation," "Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval," and "Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment."

The act of expurgation denies access to the complete work and the entire spectrum of ideas that the work is intended to express. This is censorship. Expurgation based on the premise that certain portions of a work may be harmful to minors is equally a violation of the *Library Bill of Rights*.

Expurgation without permission from the rights holder may violate the copyright provisions of the United States Code.

The decision of rights holders to alter or expurgate future versions of a work does not impose a duty on librarians to alter or expurgate earlier versions of a work. Librarians should resist such requests in the interest of historical preservation and opposition to censorship. Furthermore, librarians oppose expurgation of resources available through licensed collections. Expurgation of any library resource imposes a restriction, without regard to the rights and desires of all library users, by limiting access to ideas and information.

Adopted February 2, 1973, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; January 10, 1990; July 2, 2008; and July 1, 2014.

## 53.1.2

At the 2008 ALA Annual Conference, upon recommendation by the Council Intellectual Freedom Committee, the ALA Council adopted the following revision to ALA Policy 53.1.2: which read:

53.1.2 The act of expurgation denies access to the complete work and the entire spectrum of ideas that the work is intended to express. This is censorship. Expurgation based on the premise that certain portions of a work may be harmful to minors is equally a violation of the *Library Bill of Rights*. Adopted 1973, revised 1990, 2008.

(See "Policy Reference File": Expurgation of Library Materials: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, revised, 2007-2008 ALA CD#19.6)

## Expurgation of Library Materials

### An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Expurgating library materials is a violation of the *Library Bill of Rights*. Expurgation as defined by this interpretation includes any deletion, excision, alteration, editing, or obliteration of any part(s) of books or other library resources by the library, its agents, or its parent institution (if any) when done for the purposes of censorship. Such action stands in violation of Articles I, II, and III of the *Library Bill of Rights*, which state that "Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation," that "Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval," and that "Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment."

The act of expurgation denies access to the complete work and the entire spectrum of ideas that the work is intended to express. This is censorship. Expurgation based on the premise that certain portions of a work may be harmful to minors is equally a violation of the *Library Bill of Rights*.

Expurgation without permission from the rights holder may violate the copyright provisions of the United States Code.

The decision of rights holders to alter or expurgate future versions of a work does not impose a duty on librarians to alter or expurgate earlier versions of a work. Librarians should resist such requests in the interest of historical preservation and opposition to censorship. Furthermore, librarians oppose expurgation of resources available through licensed collections. Expurgation of any library resource imposes a restriction, without regard to the rights and desires of all library users, by limiting access to ideas and information.

Adopted February 2, 1973; amended July 1, 1981; amended January 10, 1990<sup>2008</sup>, by the  
ALA Council.

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## EXPURGATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

## An Interpretation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

Expurgating library materials is a violation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS. Expurgation as defined by this interpretation includes any deletion, excision, alteration, editing, or obliteration of any part(s) of books or other library resources by the library, its agent, or its parent institution (if any). By such expurgation, the library is in effect denying access to the complete work and the entire spectrum of ideas that the work intended to express. Such action stands in violation of Articles 1, 2, and 3 of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS, which state that "Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation," that "Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval," and that "Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment."

The act of expurgation has serious implications. It involves a determination that it is necessary to restrict access to the complete work. This is censorship. When a work is expurgated, under the assumption that certain portions of that work would be harmful to minors, the situation is no less serious.

Expurgation of any books or other library resources imposes a restriction, without regard to the rights and desires of all library users, by limiting access to ideas and information.

Further, expurgation without written permission from the holder of the copyright on the material may violate the copyright provisions of the United States Code.

Adopted February 2, 1973; amended July 1, 1981; amended  
January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council.



531.2.

all 103.4.5

## EXPURGATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

### *An Interpretation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS*

Books and other library resources are selected for their value, interest, and importance to the people of the community the library serves. Since books and other library resources are acquired for these reasons and in accordance with a written statement on materials selection, then expurgating them must be interpreted as a violation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS. Expurgation as defined by this interpretation includes any deletion, excision, alteration, or obliteration of any part(s) of books or other library resources by the library. By such expurgation, the library is in effect denying access to the complete work and the entire spectrum of ideas that the work intended to express; such action stands in violation of Articles 1, 2, and 3 of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS, which state that "Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation," that "Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval," and that "Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment."

The act of expurgation has serious implications. It involves a determination that it is necessary to restrict complete access to that material. This is censorship. When a work is expurgated, under the assumption that certain portions of that work would be harmful to minors, the situation is no less serious.

Expurgation of any books or other library resources imposes a restriction, without regard to the rights and desires of all library users, by limiting access to ideas and information.

Adopted February 2, 1973; amended July 1, 1981, by the ALA Council.

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## AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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### EXPURGATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

#### An interpretation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

Library materials are chosen for their value and interest to the community the library serves. If library materials were acquired for these reasons and in accordance with a written statement of materials selection, then to expurgate must be interpreted as a violation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS. For purposes of this statement, expurgation includes deletion, excision, alteration or obliteration. By such expurgation, the library is in effect denying access to the complete work and the full ideas that the work was intended to express; such action stands in violation of Article II of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS which states that "no library materials should be proscribed or removed from libraries because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval."

The act of expurgation has serious implications. It involves a determination by an individual that it is necessary to restrict the availability of that material. It is, in fact, censorship.

When a work is expurgated, under the assumption that certain sections of that work would be harmful to minors, the situation is no less serious. Expurgation of any library materials imposes a restriction, without regard to the rights and desires of all library users.