

B.2.1.8

(Old 53.1.8)

At the 2014 ALA Annual Conference, based on recommendation by the Committee on Intellectual Freedom, the ALA Council adopted a revision to text of ALA Policy B.2.1.8 Exhibit Spaces and Bulletin Boards: An Interpretation of the *Library Bills of Rights*

At the 2015 ALA Midwinter Meeting, the Policy Monitoring Committee (PMC), noted in its report to Council that interpretations are traditionally represented in the *ALA Policy Manual* by means of an abstract, followed by a reference to the Policy Reference File, where the full text of the Interpretations reside. In these cases the latest date of revisions and the parenthetical statements will be updated to reflect the new revision date, and the new existing text of the abstract.

The following abstract was created by the Committee on Intellectual Freedom for incorporated into the *ALA Manual Policy* as follows:

B.2.1.8 Exhibit Spaces and Bulletin Boards (Old Number 53.1.8)

Libraries that make bulletin boards available to public groups for posting notices of public interest should develop criteria for the use of these spaces based on the same considerations as those outlined above. Libraries may wish to develop criteria regarding the size of material to be displayed, the length of time materials may remain on the bulletin board, the frequency with which material may be posted for the same group, and the geographic area from which notices will be accepted. Adopted 1991, amended 2004, 2014.

(See “Policy Reference File”: Exhibit Spaces and Bulletin Boards: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*, ALA 2013-2014 ALA CD#19.9_63014_act - PDF, 8 pgs)

Exhibit Spaces and Bulletin Boards
An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*

Libraries often provide exhibit spaces and bulletin boards in physical and/or electronic formats. The uses made of these spaces should conform to the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*: Article I states, "Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation." Article II states, "Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval." Article VI maintains that exhibit space should be made available "on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use."

In developing library exhibits, staff members should endeavor to present a broad spectrum of opinion and a variety of viewpoints. Libraries should not shrink from developing exhibits because of controversial content or because of the beliefs or affiliations of those whose work is represented. Just as libraries do not endorse the viewpoints of those whose work is represented in their collections, libraries also do not endorse the beliefs or viewpoints of topics that may be the subject of library exhibits.

Exhibit areas often are made available for use by community groups. Libraries should formulate a written policy for the use of these exhibit areas to assure that space is provided on an equitable basis to all groups that request it. Written policies for exhibit space use should be stated in inclusive rather than exclusive terms. For example, a policy that the library's exhibit space is open "to organizations engaged in educational, cultural, intellectual, or charitable activities" is an inclusive statement of the limited uses of the exhibit space. This defined limitation would permit religious groups to use the exhibit space because they engage in intellectual activities, but would exclude most commercial uses of the exhibit space.

A publicly supported library may designate use of exhibit space for strictly library-related activities, provided that this limitation is viewpoint neutral and clearly defined.

Libraries may include in this policy rules regarding the time, place, and manner of use of the exhibit space, so long as the rules are content neutral and are applied in the same manner to all groups wishing to use the space. A library may wish to limit access to exhibit space to groups within the community served by the library. This practice is acceptable provided that the same rules and regulations apply to everyone, and that exclusion is not made on the basis of the doctrinal, religious, or political beliefs of the potential users.

The library should not censor or remove an exhibit because some members of the community may disagree with its content. Those who object to the content of any exhibit held at the library should be able to submit their complaint and/or their own exhibit proposal to be judged according to the policies established by the library.

Libraries may wish to post a permanent notice near the exhibit area stating that the library does not advocate or endorse the viewpoints of exhibits or exhibitors.

Libraries that make bulletin boards available to public groups for posting notices of public interest should develop criteria for the use of these spaces based on the same considerations as those outlined above. Libraries may wish to develop criteria regarding the size of material to be displayed, the length of time materials may remain on the bulletin board, the frequency with which material may be posted for the same group, and the geographic area from which notices will be accepted.

Adopted July 2, 1991, by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 2004.

53.1.8

Libraries maintaining exhibit spaces and bulletin boards for outside groups and individuals should develop and publish statements governing use to assure that space is provided on a equitable basis to all groups that request it. A publicly supported library may designate use of exhibit space for strictly library-related activities, provided that this limitation is viewpoint neutral and clearly defined. Libraries may include in this policy rules regarding the time, place, and manner of use of the exhibit space, so long as the rules are content neutral and are applied in the same manner to all groups wishing to use the space. Adopted 1991, amended 2004.

(See "Current Reference File": Exhibit Spaces and Bulletin Boards: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights.)

2003-2004 CD# 19.6

ALA American
Library
Association*Adopted July 2, 1991; amended
June 30, 2004*

Exhibit Spaces and Bulletin Boards

An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Libraries often provide exhibit spaces and bulletin boards. The uses made of these spaces should conform to the **Library Bill of Rights**: Article I states, "Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation." Article II states, "Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval." Article VI maintains that exhibit space should be made available "on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use."

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Adopted July 2, 1991, by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 2004.

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Related Files

Exhibit Spaces and Bulletin Boards (PDF File)

Related Links

Adobe Reader

53.1.8 Libraries maintaining exhibit spaces and bulletin boards for outside groups and individuals should develop and publish statements governing use to assure that space is provided on a equitable basis to all groups which request it. A publicly supported library may limit use of its exhibit space to strictly "library related" activities, provided that the limitation is clearly circumscribed and is viewpoint neutral. Libraries may include in this policy rules regarding the time, place, and the manner of use of the exhibit space, so long as the rules are content neutral and are applied in the same manner to all groups wishing to use the space. Adopted 1991.

(See "Current Reference File": Exhibit Spaces and Bulletin Boards: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights.)

EXHIBIT SPACES AND BULLETIN BOARDS

An Interpretation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

Libraries often provide exhibit spaces and bulletin boards. The uses made of these spaces should conform to the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS: Article I states, "Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation." Article II states, "Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval." Article VI maintains that exhibit space should be made available "on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use."

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