

Resolution on replacing the Library of Congress Subject Heading "Illegal aliens" with "Undocumented immigrants"

Whereas in 2015-16 ALA Council passed the Resolution **on Replacing the Library of Congress Subject Heading "Illegal Aliens" with "Undocumented Immigrants"** ;

Whereas the Library of Congress (LC) announced on March 22, 2016 that it would remove the term "Illegal alien" from the LC Subject Heading (LCSH) system, replacing it with "Noncitizen" and, to describe the act of residing without authorization, "Unauthorized immigration";

Whereas On June 10, 2016 the U.S. House of Representatives voted 237 to 170 to order the Library of Congress to continue using the term (H3691);

Whereas on July 16, 2019, Rep. Joaquin Castro [D-TX 20] (Introduced legislation to remove offensive and inflammatory language characterizing immigrants as "aliens" from federal law(H.R.3776);

Whereas in his second day of office, President Biden proposed removing the term "alien" from U.S. immigration laws and replacing it with the word "noncitizen," marking a stark break from the previous administration which encouraged the use of the term "alien";

Whereas libraries across the country have made this change to their own subject headings;

Whereas the ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) Thesaurus and MeSH (Medical Subject Headings) both use the term *Undocumented immigrants*, and both are produced by federal government agencies;

Whereas the ALA policy B.3 (Diversity) states that "ALA recognizes the critical need for access to library and information resources, services, and technologies by all people, especially those who may experience... discrimination on the basis of appearance, ethnicity, immigrant status..."; and

Whereas the ALA policy B.1.1 (Core Values of Librarianship) states that all library users should receive "accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests"; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA), on behalf of its members:

- 1) supports the Library of Congress in changing the subject heading Illegal aliens to Undocumented immigrants.
- 2) Directs the CORE Subject Analysis Committee's Working Group to prepare a report of recommendations by Annual 2021.

Mover: Kimberly A. Patton, ALSC Division Councilor

Seconded: Ed Garcia, Executive Board

References

- 1) **Subject Analysis Committee 2016 Report:** <https://alair.ala.org/handle/11213/9261>
- 2) **Resolution on Replacing the Library of Congress Subject Heading "Illegal Aliens" with "Undocumented Immigrants":**

<https://connect.ala.org/HigherLogic/System/DownloadDocumentFile.ashx?DocumentFileKey=fadb9d2d-fdce-4581-97f7-4034a6ab2fc9&forceDialog=0>
- 3) H3683: <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2016/06/10/house-section/article/H3683-1>
- 4) HR3776: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/3776?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22CHANGE+Act%22%5D%7D&s=5&r=19>
- 5) Biden proposal: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/21/politics/alien-biden-immigration-law/index.html>

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