

From the Chair

Susanne Caro



Greetings members,

The last few months have been mentally and emotionally draining for many of us. The murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and too many others at the hands of police and the lynching of

Ahmaud Arbery has rocked the nation. Protests for justice are met with more police violence.

The Government Documents Round Table condemns the institutionalized violence, terror, and suppression of Black Americans and People of Color. We endorse the Black Caucus of the American Library Associations' Statement Condemning Increased Violence and Racism Towards Black Americans and People of Color (<https://www.bcala.org/statement-condemning-increased-violence-and-racism-towards-black-americans-and-people-of-color>).

I encourage members to take a focused look at systemic racism in our government and institutions at all levels. Ask yourself what can I do in the coming weeks, months and years to prevent injustice? Are you willing to tear down flawed structures to build a more equitable society? What in GODORT needs to be dismantled to make our organization more equitable, diverse, and inclusive?

As library professionals and government information specialists we provide our communities with the tools to reach representatives, access laws, and navigate the paths toward real change. We are especially well positioned to serve voters. The coming election promises to be contentious and fears of widespread disenfranchisement in November are well-founded. States formerly covered by the Voting Rights Act closed 1,688 polling places between 2012 and 2018. In Texas, fear of

contracting Covid-19 is not a valid reason to vote by mail. We know voting is how the People are heard, and change is realized, that is why GODORT supports voters rights.

Our 2020 ALA Annual Conference program Civic Duty? Libraries and the Disenfranchised—<https://godort.libguides.com/civilduty>—brought experts together to discuss major issues related to disenfranchisement and voter rights resources for libraries. This panel is the beginning of a longer, continuing conversation led by incoming GODORT Chair Lynda Kellam, Deborah Caldwell, and Kian Flynn. The Education Committee launched the Voting and Elections Toolkits—<https://godort.libguides.com/votingtoolkit>—a resource that provides important voter information for each state, and the District of Columbia. This tool for libraries includes registration and identification requirements, mail-in ballots, and other resources. Please share this resource with libraries in your state.

It has been a year of upheaval. As I step down as chair I am grateful for the work of our members, committees and volunteers. I am thankful for those who have stepped forward to serve in the coming year and I look forward to supporting your goals.

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