



April 12, 2024

VIA Online Portal to Author and Assembly Committees on Education and Judiciary

The Honorable Al Muratsuchi
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 5310
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1825 (Muratsuchi) – California Freedom to Read Act – SUPPORT

The League of Women Voters of California writes in strong support of AB 1825, which prohibits public libraries from banning books or other materials because of the topic or content of the book. It explicitly prohibits book bans that discriminate on the basis of race, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, political affiliation, or socioeconomic status, or on the basis that the materials under consideration contain inclusive and diverse perspectives, or on the basis that the materials may include sexual content, unless that content qualifies as obscene under Supreme Court precedent. The legislation would ensure that public libraries in California continue to be a source of information and inspiration to persons of all ages, cultural backgrounds, and economic statuses.

The League supports access by all persons to public library services as a major source of knowledge and information necessary for informed, active participation in a democratic society. We believe that our democratic government depends on informed and active participation at all levels of government. Libraries provide essential resources to educate the public and promote civic engagement. Furthermore, many book bans target works that relate to issues of race, gender identity and sexuality. By stripping shelves of literature related to particular communities we erase their existence, scrub out their history, deny their representation, lose the opportunity to expand everyone's knowledge and understanding, and participate in the marginalization of large swathes of society.

Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi

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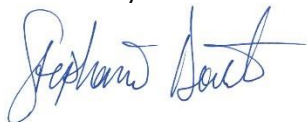
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Libraries are essential for information, education, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. They help us connect to and find our place in the larger world. They provide access to books that offer teachable moments for readers of all ages and expand our understanding of people with different backgrounds, ideas, and beliefs. A person's right to use a library and access meaningful literature should not be denied or abridged solely because of personal characteristics, age, background, or views.

Librarians are trained not to impose their own thoughts and opinions on which ideas are right, but to make knowledge and ideas available so that people have the freedom to choose what to read. Librarians receive extensive professional training to develop and curate collections to meet the broad and diverse interests of their communities, which include, but are not limited to, literary value and the developmental appropriateness of material.

Removing and banning books from public libraries are acts of government censorship and run counter to our country's commitment to freedom of expression and the right to receive information. They diminish our humanity and narrow our world view. **For all the aforementioned reasons, the League of Women Voters of California is in strong support of AB 1825.** Thank you for authoring this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephanie Doute". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Stephanie Doute
Executive Director