Recently, there have been efforts, both here in Montana and nationally, to execute campaigns of censorship against certain kinds of books held by public libraries, especially those pertaining to BIPOC and LGBTQIA communities.

The Missoula Public Library Board of Trustees stands firmly behind its policy that the right to read is basic to the intellectual freedom of our community. ~~Books are amazing in so many ways, especially as a means of free communication – a cornerstone of our democracy, guaranteed by the Constitution.~~ The right to freely seek and receive information is a cornerstone of our democracy, guaranteed by the United States Constitution.

As long as books have existed, however, groups have made efforts to restrict access ~~to them~~ or even destroy them, in order to intimidate or dehumanize people and groups. ~~the groups to which they pertain.~~ We as a board support the freedom to read and ~~extremely concerned at~~ reject ~~these~~ efforts ~~of a few~~ to suppress the Constitutional right of individuals ~~freedom of others~~ to select for themselves what is appropriate to read.

Libraries, like our community and country, are big enough to encompass a broad spectrum of people and voices. We are committed to making sure that when anyone uses the library, ~~enters our building,~~ they are able to find materials that reflect who they are and what they believe, as well as ~~those~~ materials that might challenge or illuminate.

Everyone has a right to select material for themselves, but not to restrict what others may choose. The Board of Trustees will continue to stand for the Constitutional right to freely access information without government interference or limitations. ~~, tolerance, and respect for opposing points of view that is the bedrock of our democratic society.~~

For more information on the Constitutional right to read, please visit the American Library Association’s page on the [First Amendment and Censorship](https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/censorship).