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**CONTACT:** [Bridgette Bauer](#)

Cell: 734-678-2562

## **New campaign urges Michiganders to protect their right to read and oppose book banning efforts**

**LANSING, Mich.** – With the rise of book banning and censorship efforts in libraries around the country, the Michigan Library Association (MLA) is launching a six-month [MI Right to Read](#) campaign, encouraging residents to oppose censorship and book banning efforts and protect their First Amendment right to read whatever they choose to at public libraries.

Public libraries are being targeted at an alarming rate by individuals and extremist groups to remove books that discuss topics such as racism, sexuality, gender, and history – censoring different perspectives.

In Ottawa County's Jamestown Township, [residents voted down a library millage in the last midterm election](#), forcing the closure of the only local library after staff refused to remove LGBTQ books from its collection. Earlier this year, Michigan libraries were thrust into the political spotlight once more with [a party-line vote on a resolution in the state House to honor Librarian and Library Worker Day](#), with Republicans all opposing.

In a statewide [poll](#) commissioned by MLA, 75% of respondents said we need to protect access to books, especially for young people learning about different perspectives, and 83% of all respondents would support state legislation that would protect the right of the public to read what they wish to read in local public libraries and not have books banned.

“The majority of Michiganders support the work our public libraries do and want to see various perspectives portrayed in the content available at their local libraries,” said Debbie Mikula, executive director of the Michigan Library Association.

“Michigan’s public libraries are centers for community, and we want to ensure that librarians across Michigan can do their jobs and serve the needs of all individuals.”

“Every family in Michigan has a different background, and our youth deserve to see themselves reflected in books available at their local public library,” said Michigan Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist II. “Reading unlocks creativity, courage and imagination. Having diverse content available at our public libraries is crucial in making Michigan a better place for our kids to learn and grow.”

The MI Right to Read campaign is urging Michigan parents to join the coalition of more than 1,500 members and speak out against book banning and censorship efforts happening throughout the state. The [MI Right to Read website](#) also has tips and resources for families looking to explore their local public library.

“We need help from parents and all community members when they see these types of efforts to limit or censor content at our public libraries,” said Juliane Morian, coalition member and Rochester Hills Public Library director. “Parents should know that librarians want to partner with them during their family visits to the library to help guide children to age-appropriate content. We can also share resources they might not know exist at the library, like e-books, audiobooks, STEM kits and more.”

Learn more about the MI Right to Read campaign and coalition at [MIRightToRead.com/parents](http://MIRightToRead.com/parents).

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*MI Right to Read is an initiative of the [Michigan Library Association](#) (MLA), coordinated through the leadership of the Intellectual Freedom Task Force. The Michigan Library Association is Michigan’s oldest and largest library association. Since 1891, MLA has led the advancement of all Michigan libraries through advocacy, education, and engagement. MLA’s membership is comprised of individual and organizational members from public, academic, school, tribal, and special libraries. For more information visit [milibraries.org](http://milibraries.org).*