



Thoughts about agenda item--Policy Review

1 message

Noelle Johnson <noellemjohnson@outlook.com>

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To: Rae Grulkowski <rgrulkowski@cascadecountymt.gov>, Jessica Crist <crist.jessica@gmail.com>, Sam Deforest <deforest67@gmail.com>, Whitney Olson <whitneyolson@gmail.com>, Anne Bulger <anne.h.bulger@gmail.com>, Shannon Wilson <swilson@greatfallsmt.net>, Susie McIntyre <smcintyre@greatfallslibrary.org>

Board Members & Susie,

I wanted to share this with all of you before the meeting. The below is in regards to a portion of the proposed Policy Manual changes.

It as red language that is an addition to ALA Code of Ethics on pg 62 of the January Board packet. It is part of agenda item "Old Business"--item B, GFPL Policy Review".

The phrase "social justice" is a political ideology and agenda and therefore has NO place in formal library policy. Additionally, the library should not formally state it will allocate resources for a political agenda.

A library having books available on a various ideologies or political agendas is very different than formally stating in policy that, "We work...to advance" an ideology "

Here's how that same statement would look to have formal policy language stated with other ideologies:

"We work...to advance *gun rights* in our libraries...through advocacy...and allocation of resources..."

OR

"We work...to advance *pro-life* rights in our libraries...through advocacy...and allocation of resources..."

OR

"We work...to advance *pro-choice* rights..."

OR

"We work...to advance (fill in the blank with another that comes to mind)..."

No matter which side of the political spectrum the issue, ideology, or agenda lies, Library Policy in NO WAY should state it will **advance** any ideology and through the **allocation of resources**.

Our Great Falls Public Library should NOT have formal policy that specifically states it will **advance** a political agenda. OR **allocate resources** to do so. This proposed change does exactly that.

Do we need to:

- amend and accept only the Code of Ethics prior to the 2021 addition?
- move to postpone this motion?
- move both ALA items (Bill of Rights and Code of Ethics) to Appendix B of the Policy Manual? (The ALA Bill of Rights is already there, so not sure why it appears in the manual twice.)

Additional background:

- In 1930s—term widely associated w/pro-Nazi and antisemitic groups
- 20th century—appears in Cuban constitution
- Michael Novak—served as US Ambassador to UN Commission on Human Rights in 1981 & 1982—the term "social justice" is an instrument of ideological intimidation

- 2006 United Nations document “Social Justice in and Open World: The Role of the United Nations”—“Following the revolutions that shook Europe in the mid-1800s, social justice became a rallying cry for progressive thinkers and political activists...By the mid-twentieth century, the concept of social justice has become central to the ideologies and programs of virtually all the leftist and centrist political parties around the world...”
- Friedrich Hayek, Austrian-British economist and political philosopher, 1974 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences; according to Hayek--believes “the function of social justice is to blame someone else, often attributed to “the system” or those who are supposed, mythically, to control it.
- Another issue besides it being a political ideology is “social justice” is vague--means a different things depending on who is defining it, clearly evident by above examples

Sincerely,
Noelle Johnson