



May 18, 2023

His Worship, Brandon Burley, Mayor of Morden
His Worship, Harv Schroeder, Mayor of Altona
His Worship, Henry Siemens, Mayor of Winkler
Reeve Brian Callum, Rural Municipality of Thompson
Reeve Glenn Shiskoski, Municipality of Pembina

RE: Censorship of library material at South Central Regional Library (SCRL)

We, the librarians of the **Manitoba Association of Health Information Providers (MAHIP)**, are concerned about the recent attempts to limit intellectual freedom and deliberately misinform the public regarding material in the South Central Regional Library.

Access to reliable health information is a key public service for people of all ages. The attempted censorship of Robie H. Harris' *It's Perfectly Normal* and Cory Silverberg's *Sex is a Funny Word* and *What Makes a Baby* is deeply worrying, as these books inform young adults and adolescents about making healthy choices. Librarians are educated on the selection of books and would never select materials for children that promote harm.

There are recent documented, well-organized, and coordinated campaigns occurring throughout North America that run counter to democratic principles. These campaigns seek to limit accessibility of library material and the freedom to read, a freedom which is central to a democratic society. These campaigns are often politicized and represent only one viewpoint and perspective. Often these campaigns harass and intimidate library workers.

In late 2021, the American Library Association (ALA) released a statement strongly condemning frivolous acts of censorship and intimidation. In the statement, which MAHIP stands firmly behind, they write:

"We stand opposed to censorship and any effort to coerce belief, suppress opinion, or punish those whose expression does not conform to what is deemed to be orthodox in history, politics, or belief. The unfettered exchange of ideas is essential to the preservation of a free and democratic society."

These coordinated campaigns of censorship go against the [core values of librarianship](#), which provides a community hub for *all* community members, not just *some*. Libraries strive to represent diverse perspectives and contribute to a culture of tolerance.

We ask the city and rural municipality leadership of locations of the South Central Regional Library to support, protect, and defend library staff from harassment and intimidation. We stand behind the SCRL's refusal to censor information and to be intimidated by politicized groups. We strongly urge city

council and rural municipality leadership to do so as well and send a strong message that access to information and resources is a fundamental right.

Sincerely,

Caroline Monnin

President, Manitoba Association of Health Information Providers (MAHIP)

on behalf of the Manitoba Association of Health Information Providers (MAHIP)

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CC:

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