



TO: House Education Committee  
FROM: Sandra Cameron, Associate Executive Dir., Vermont School Boards Assoc.  
RE: H.480 Education Miscellaneous Bill  
DATE: May 14, 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on [Section 16 of H.480](#) (draft 13.2), which addresses the selection of library materials.

[Act 150 \(2024\)](#) made several amendments to the laws governing public and school libraries. Section 7a (codified as 16 VSA § 1624(c)) established a requirement for each school board and each approved independent school to develop, adopt, and ensure enforcement of a library material selection **policy and procedures** for the reconsideration and retention of materials “that affirms the importance of intellectual freedom, guided by the First Amendment of the US Constitution, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Vermont laws prohibiting discrimination in places of public accommodation, **the American Library Association’s Freedom to Read Statement, Vermont’s Freedom to Read Statement**, and that reflect Vermont’s diverse people and history...”

There are two requests for amendments to this statute:

- 1) Roles & Responsibilities: Policies are developed and adopted by boards and the VSBA has developed and issued a model policy to respond to this requirement. Procedures are developed and implemented by the superintendent and/or designee, not the board.
  - The VSBA’s request is reflected in H.480, draft 13.2. This is a technical correction such that the requirement for procedures is assigned to the superintendent, not to the school board as currently written.
- 2) Policy Framework: The association statements developed by the American Library Association (ALA) and Vermont’s Library Association and Vermont School Library Association are vulnerable to societal shifts over time. In fact, the ALA’s Statement has gone through several iterations: 1953, 1972, 1991, 2000 and 2004. Requiring a policy that includes statements from associations may result in school district compliance requirements that are subject to societal shifts over time and may not reflect the will of the State of Vermont or the local school board.
  - The VSBA’s request is reflected in H.480, draft 13.2. The statements in the intent of Act 150 would include the dates of these association statements to ensure that the intention of their inclusion remains constant.

Attached is the proposed language, as requested in amended statute.

**VSBA Requested amendment to H.480**  
**Re: Act 150 of 2023 Selection of Library Materials**

**Title 16 : Education**  
**Chapter 042 : STUDENT RIGHTS**  
(Cite as: 16 V.S.A. § 1624)

**§ 1624. School library material selection policy [Effective July 1, 2025]**

(a) Each school board and each approved independent school shall develop, adopt, ensure the enforcement of, and make available in the manner described under subdivision 563(1) of this title a library material selection policy. Each Superintendent or Head of School shall develop and implement and procedures for the reconsideration and retention of materials. The policy and procedures shall affirm the importance of intellectual freedom and be guided by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Vermont laws prohibiting discrimination in places of public accommodation, the 2004 American Library Association's Freedom to Read Statement, the 2024 Vermont's Freedom to Read Statement, and reflect Vermont's diverse people and history, including diversity of race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability status, religion, and political beliefs.

(b) In order to ensure a student's First Amendment rights are protected and all students' identities are affirmed and dignity respected, the policy and procedures required under subsection (a) of this section shall prohibit the removal of school library materials for the following reasons:

- (1) partisan approval or disapproval;
- (2) the author's race, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, political views, or religious views;
- (3) school board members' or members of the public's discomfort, personal morality, political views, or religious views;
- (4) the author's point of view concerning the problems and issues of our time, whether international, national, or local;
- (5) the race, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, political views, or religious views of the protagonist or other characters; or
- (6) content related to sexual health that addresses physical, mental, emotional, or social dimensions of human sexuality, including puberty, sex, and relationships.

(c) The policy and procedures required under subsection (a) of this section shall ensure that school library staff are responsible for curating and developing collections that provide students with access to a wide array of materials that are relevant to students' research, independent reading interests, and educational needs, as well as ensuring such materials are tailored to the cognitive and emotional levels of the children served by the school. (Added 2023, No. 150 (Adj. Sess.), § 7a, eff. July 1, 2025.)