



PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the American Library Association's Banned Books Week celebrates the Freedom to Read each year as a reminder to Americans not to take their freedom for granted; and

WHEREAS, the freedom to read is essential to our democracy, and reading is among our greatest freedoms; and

WHEREAS, privacy is essential to the exercise of that freedom, and the right to privacy is the right to open inquiry without having the subject of one's interest judged, examined, or scrutinized by others; and

WHEREAS, the freedom to read is protected by our Constitution and intellectual freedom is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture; and

WHEREAS, all library books and resources should be accessible for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves; and

WHEREAS, no books or resource materials should be excluded or censored because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation no matter how controversial the topic such as culture, religion, love, war, science and technology; and

WHEREAS, libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide free access of all expressions of ideas and information; and

WHEREAS, conformity limits the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and culture depend; and

WHEREAS, the American Library Association's Office of Intellectual Freedom has found a dramatic increase in book challenges in the last several years; and

WHEREAS, 4,235 unique titles were challenged in 2025, only five titles fewer than the record high set in 2023 since ALA started collecting censorship data 20 years ago, an almost 500% increase from the 729 challenged titles in 2021; and

WHEREAS, currently most of the attempts to remove library materials are on topics of LGBTQIA+ issues, books by Black authors, and books that document the experiences of BIPOC people; and

WHEREAS, 51% of the book challenges happen in public libraries, with school libraries running close behind at 37%, schools at 8%, and higher education libraries and other institutions, 3%; and

WHEREAS, some individuals, groups, and public authorities work to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries of materials reflecting the diversity of society; and

WHEREAS, community members can show support and celebrate the freedom to read by visiting the American Library Association's website where one can find the top 11 list of 2025 challenged books and statement on book censorship.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Mayor and City Council of the City of Lake Forest Park do hereby proclaim the month of October as

FREEDOM TO READ MONTH

and encourage all residents of the City of Lake Forest Park to learn more about book censorship and support people's right to read on all perspectives without restriction.

Signed this 24th day of September, 2026

Tom French, Mayor