



PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the American Library Association's Banned Books Week celebrates the Freedom to Read as observed 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, to name a few; 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, with 2023 having the highest number since ALA started collecting censorship data 20 years ago, with 4,240 unique titles, and 2,452 unique titles challenged in 2024; and

WHEREAS, the most common reasons for challenges are false claims of illegal obscenity for minors; inclusion of LGBTQIA+ characters or themes; and dealing with topics of race, racism, inclusivity, equity and social justice; and

WHEREAS, most of the book challenges happen in public libraries, 55%, with school libraries at 38%, schools 5%, and higher education libraries and other institutions 2%; 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 10 list of 2024 challenged books and statement on book censorship; and

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 citizens 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 25th day of September 2025

Tom French, Mayor