

Intellectual Freedom

State Librarian Mary Soucie

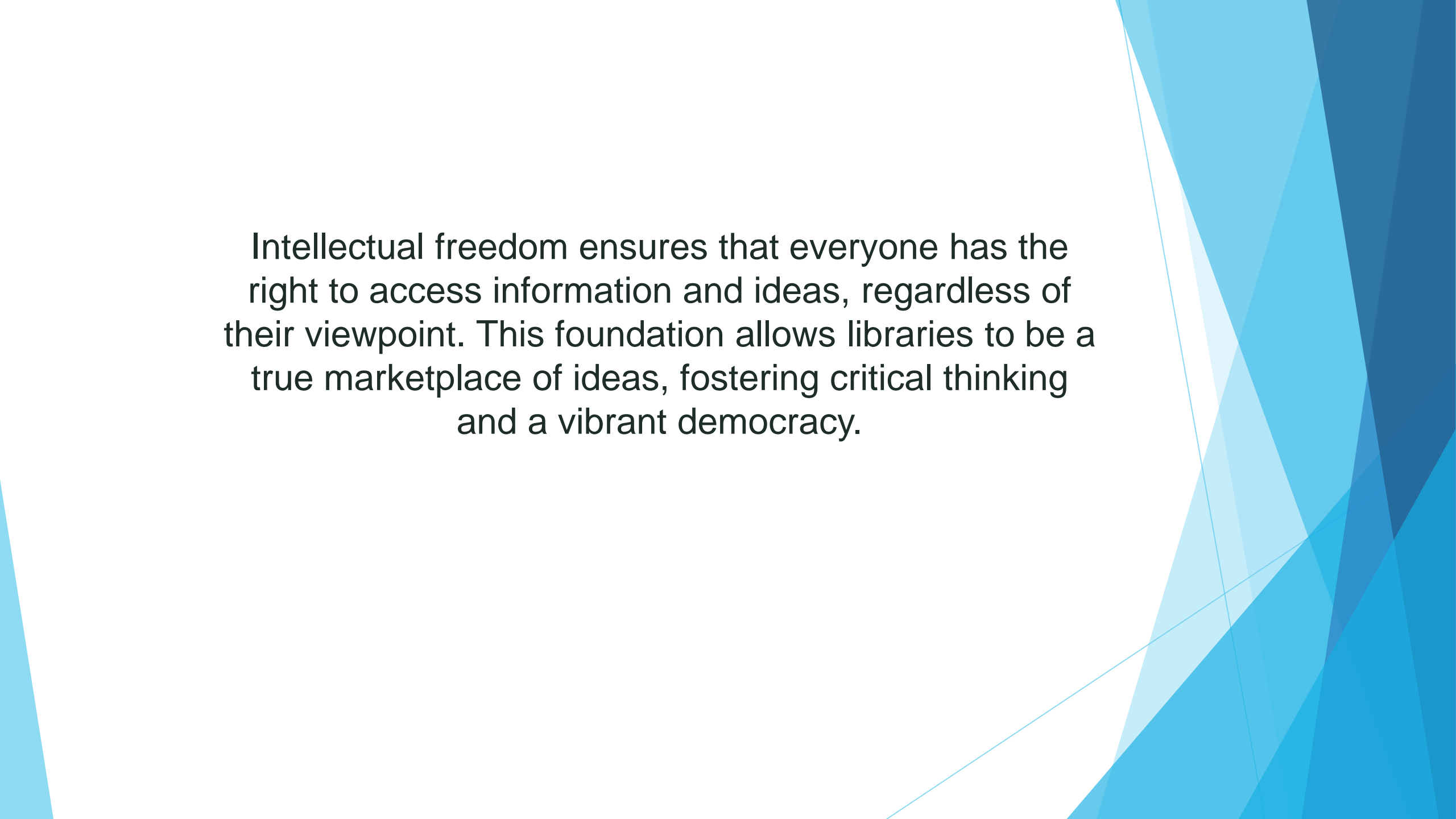
April 2024



Housekeeping

This is our first conference using Microsoft Teams. Please be patient as we work through any bumps in the road.

If you were placed in this session in error, please hit the return button and let Cindy know which session you had selected.

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of blue, ranging from light sky blue to deep navy blue. These shapes are primarily located on the right side of the frame, creating a modern, layered effect. The text is centered on the left side of the image.

Intellectual freedom ensures that everyone has the right to access information and ideas, regardless of their viewpoint. This foundation allows libraries to be a true marketplace of ideas, fostering critical thinking and a vibrant democracy.

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What is Intellectual Freedom?

The freedom to seek and receive information from all sources

The freedom to express ideas and opinions freely

The freedom to have access to a variety of viewpoints, even those we disagree with

The freedom to be challenged intellectually

Book Challenges

A formal complaint requesting the removal or restriction of a book from a library or school collection

Can be initiated by individuals, parents, or community groups

Reasons for challenges can include profanity, violence, sexual content, or perceived bias

Does not necessarily result in the book being removed

Book Bans



The removal of a book from a library or school collection after a formal challenge



Represents a restriction on access to information and ideas



Can have a chilling effect on intellectual freedom



Often controversial and generate public debate

01

Challenge is a complaint, a ban is the outcome

02

Challenges don't always result in bans, bans permanently restrict access

03

Challenges can spark discussion, bans limit access to information and ideas

Key Differences Between Bans and Challenges

Why is Intellectual Freedom important?



- Supports democracy by fostering an informed citizenry
- Encourages critical thinking and independent decision-making
- Promotes tolerance and understanding of diverse viewpoints
- Protects the free flow of information and ideas

Challenges to Intellectual Freedom

Censorship attempts to remove or restrict access to materials

Challenges can come from individuals, groups, or even governments

Reasons for censorship can include political views, religious beliefs, or perceived obscenity

Self-censorship occurs when librarians avoid acquiring materials for fear of controversy

Protecting Intellectual Freedom

Associations such as the American Library Association (ALA), Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL), and the North Dakota Library Association (NDLA) provide resources and support

Develop and uphold collection development policies based on intellectual freedom principles

Have a clear and well-publicized reconsideration policy for challenged materials

Educate patrons about their right to access information

Additional Resources



ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom

<https://www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/oif>



ARSL <https://www.arsl.org/advocacy-center>



Every Library <https://www.everylibrary.org/>

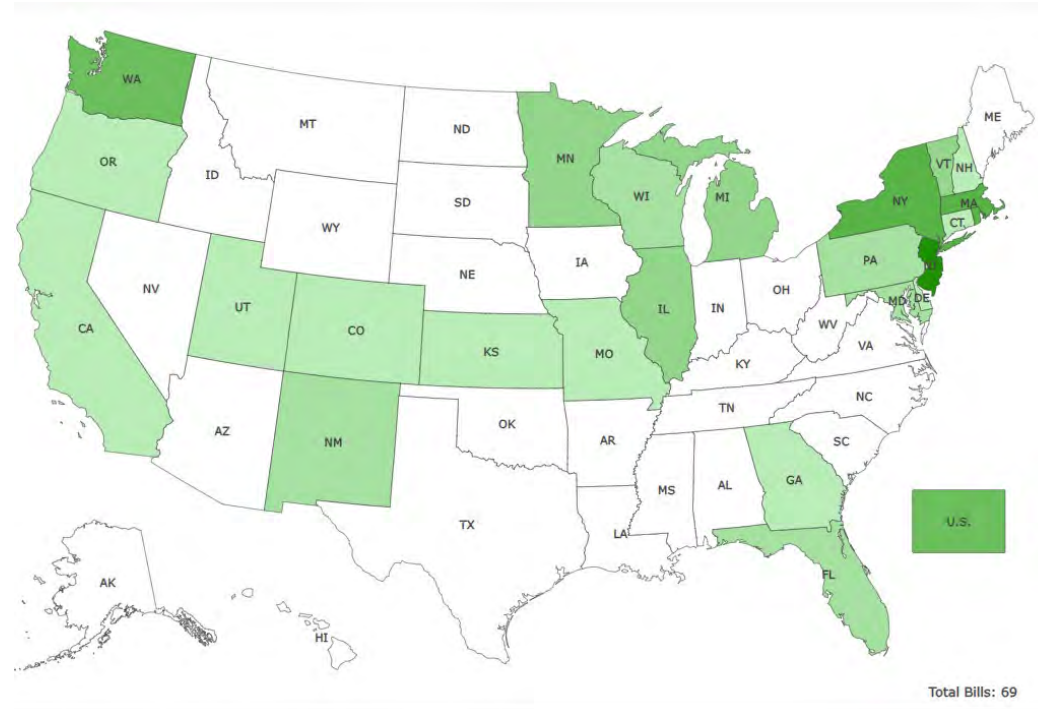


PEN America <https://pen.org/>

Tracking Legislation Related to Intellectual Freedom

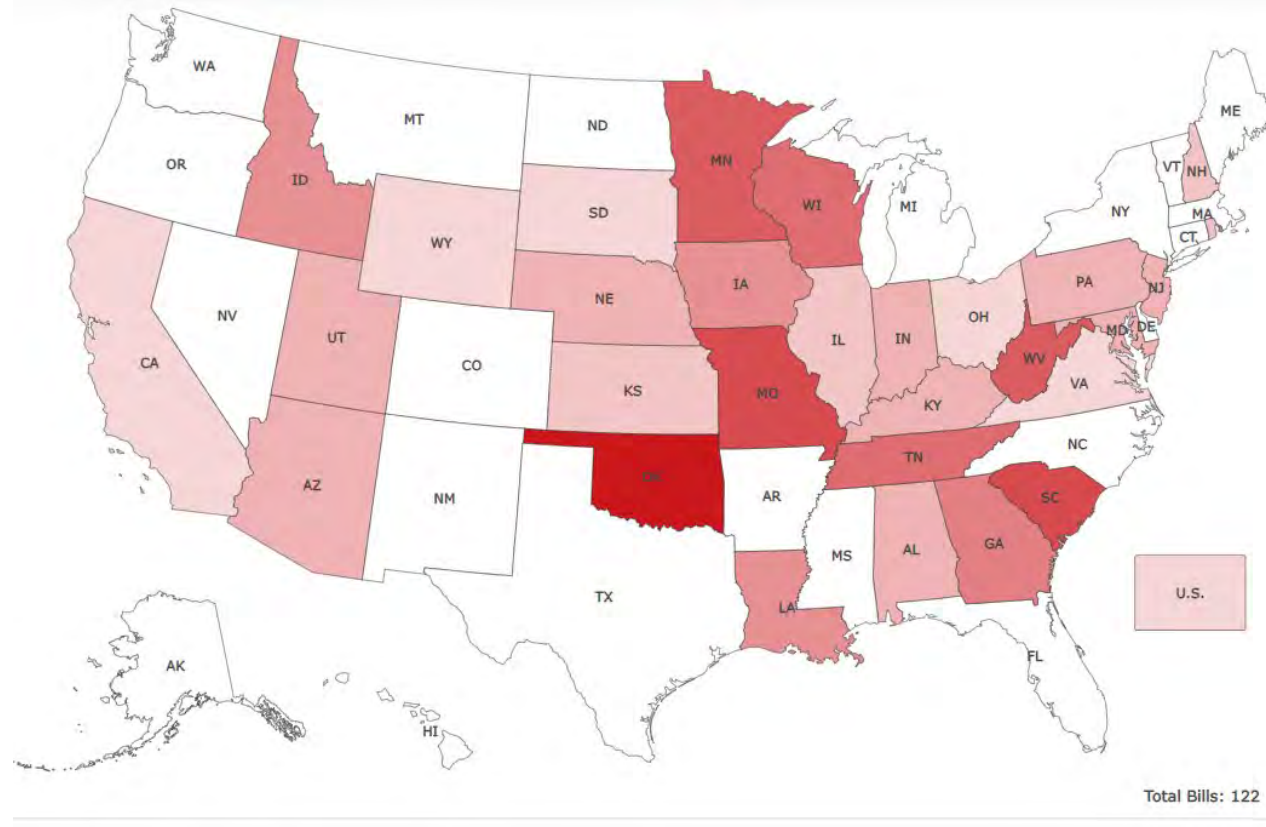
- ▶ <https://www.everylibrary.org/positivebills>
- ▶ <https://www.everylibrary.org/billtracking>
- ▶ <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/adverse-legislation-states>

Legislation to Protect Intellectual Freedom



► Source: EveryLibrary
<https://www.everylibrary.org/positivebills>

Legislation to Restrict Intellectual Freedom



Source: EveryLibrary <https://www.everylibrary.org/billtracking>

Misinformation



Unintentional: The person spreading the information doesn't know it's wrong. They might be mistaken, have been fooled themselves, or simply not have checked the facts.



Can be many forms: Misinformation can come in the form of headlines, social media posts, articles, rumors, or even personal anecdotes.



Spread easily: In our fast-paced world, information travels quickly online and through word-of-mouth. Misinformation can be catchy and spread rapidly before anyone realizes it's inaccurate.

1

Sharing a news story from an unreliable source without checking its credibility

2

Forwarding a chain email with false information about a product or health scare

3

Repeating a rumor you heard from someone else without verifying it

Examples of Misinformation

Why Misinformation Matters



Even though it's not spread with malicious intent, misinformation can still have negative consequences. It can:



Cause confusion and make it difficult to find accurate information.



Lead to bad decisions based on false facts.



Erode trust in institutions and experts.



Hinder important discussions and debates

Disinformation

Disinformation is a step beyond misinformation. It's **false information spread deliberately** to mislead people. There's a calculated intent to deceive and manipulate.

Malicious Intent: Disinformation is crafted and spread for a specific reason, like influencing public opinion, undermining trust in something, or promoting an agenda

Various Tactics: Disinformation campaigns use many tactics, like creating fake news articles, manipulating photos or videos (deepfakes), or planting rumors and conspiracy theories

Organized Efforts: Disinformation is often spread by individuals or groups with an agenda and can be quite sophisticated

01

Fake news

articles: These articles are designed to look like real news stories, but they contain false or misleading information.

02

Fabricated documents

or photos: These can be used to support a false narrative.

03

Rumors and conspiracy theories:

These are often spread online and can be very difficult to debunk.

Examples of Disinformation

Effects of Disinformation

Erodes Trust: It can make people distrust legitimate sources of information, like news outlets and experts.



Fuels Division: Disinformation can be used to deepen existing societal divides and create conflict.



Hinders Progress: By spreading falsehoods, it can make it difficult to address real issues and challenges.

Avoid Misinformation and Disinformation



Check the Source: See if the information comes from a reputable source with a history of fact-checking.



Look for Evidence: Does the information have any basis in reality? Are there credible sources to back it up?



Be Wary of Emotionally Charged Content: Disinformation often uses strong emotions to manipulate people.

Misinformation or Disinformation?





Questions?

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