
Canadian Library Month Statement – October 1, 2026

On behalf of Canada's libraries, the Canadian Federation of Library Associations opens Canadian Library Month 2026 by affirming the public's right to read in Canada, a right that must not be limited by age or by government opinion.

As young people in Alberta face new limits on their freedom to read in public libraries, along with increased scrutiny of their reading choices, libraries across Canada stand together to affirm that intellectual freedom and privacy are essential to informed decision-making and a healthy democracy.

Under Alberta's new requirements, access to certain lawful library materials will no longer be ordinary or private. Libraries must physically separate these materials, control access to them, observe browsing, and establish processes for determining age and parental authorization. These requirements turn ordinary library access into a government-mandated process of monitoring and permission.

Canadians should understand that the changes being imposed on Alberta libraries establish both censorship and surveillance. While the government has not named the specific titles libraries must restrict, government representatives have identified the kinds of materials being targeted. Alberta libraries are not being given the option to determine that their collections are appropriate and should remain fully accessible.

For decades, Canada's libraries have upheld and promoted the universal principles of intellectual freedom reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including the freedoms to hold opinions and to seek, receive, and share information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. We are deeply concerned to see a government in Canada move toward censorship and increased surveillance of people's reading choices.

Claims that children are being placed at risk in libraries misrepresents how libraries work and takes materials out of context to create fear. Parents and caregivers already have the right and responsibility to guide their children's reading choices, and libraries have systems in place to support families in doing so.

We call on the people of Alberta to recognize the seriousness of this legislation and to work to restore young people's right to read and everyone's right to be free from government surveillance in libraries. We also call on local and provincial governments across Canada to stand with libraries, prevent censorship efforts from spreading, and uphold every person's right to make their own reading choices.