

# Louisiana Citizens Against Censorship



Fighting for Free Speech in the Bayou State

## Statement Regarding HB 974

Louisiana Citizens Against Censorship has opposed HB 974 since its original introduction as HB 168, and we are saddened to learn of its final passage by the Louisiana Legislature. From the beginning, the author and sponsors of this bill have been at best disingenuous and at worst blatantly untruthful about its purpose.

HB 974, touted by its author as simply a way to “empower” library boards of control when searching for candidates to fill library director positions across the state, was never supported by data showing there was a dearth of such applicants. Instead, the bill was specifically written to provide legal justification for the Lafayette Public Library’s Board of Control, which passed a motion earlier in the year to open up their own field of candidates to non-librarians, as they are currently seeking to fill their empty director’s seat for the fourth time in three years.

Even more egregious, however, was the addition of an amendment as HB 974 was debated in the Senate. This amendment, which gives parish governing authorities the power to abolish library boards, has been presented to the House three times in the last two legislative sessions, failing each time in committee. To then add the language of these bills at the 11th hour is not only a subversion of the legislative process, but a slap in the face to the thousands of Louisiana citizens who took the time to write their representatives in opposition.

Louisiana Citizens Against Censorship will continue to support our libraries and fight against efforts to restrict the rights of its citizens to access library materials. We will continue to fight to protect librarians against the slander and unsubstantiated attacks by paid anti-literacy and anti-education political operatives. As a cornerstone of our Democracy, free access to information is both vital and worthy of protection.

We remain committed to a better Louisiana for all.