

What is a public library? A public library is a repository of knowledge available to every single person in America. A library serves every single person, irrespective of one's color, religion, socioeconomic position, or any other delineation that society creates. A library represents each of us. All of us. The fabric of American culture is varied and vibrant, and the books in a public library reflect our unique culture in stories and history. A library is a neutral ground where all are welcomed and represented equally.

Libraries in America are under attack. There are those who wish to elicit control of American society by regulating the availability of books. Not content with exerting control over their families' consumption of literature, these citizens desire to govern the general public's ability to navigate public library shelves. These citizen censors wish to exclude literature that does not conform to a minority's personal belief system. The Constitution's First Amendment states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech." As government-funded public institutions, our public libraries shall not abridge the freedom of speech. By subjecting our public libraries to censorship, Americans' First Amendment rights are being violated.

My name is Suzette Baker, and I was a public librarian. I spoke out against censorship and improper administration. I was terminated. Books are being taken off the shelves as we speak. Make no mistake, our intellectual freedom is under attack. I urge you to support and advocate for your public libraries and the incredible public librarians who staff them. They are under fire from patrons and administrators alike.