

**ALA Executive Board**  
**2017 Fall Board Meeting**

**TO:** ALA Executive Board

**RE:** ALA Participation and Values

**ACTION REQUESTED:** Approval and discussion of distribution

**DRAFT MOTION:** *The ALA Executive Board approves the attached statement*

**REQUESTED BY:** Mary Ghikas, Interim Executive Director,  
Jeff Julian, Director, ALA Public Awareness Office

**DATE:** 18 October 2017

**BACKGROUND:**

In an increasingly divisive social environment, ALA is called upon more and more to respond to actions that are contrary to ALA's values or the values of ALA members by governments, officials or regulatory bodies in the U.S. or abroad. In some cases, individuals or groups may call upon the Association to avoid holding or participating in events in a state or country whose values are in conflict with those of ALA. At the same time, the Association's mission requires presence and continued advocacy. The attached statement both acknowledges ALA's strongly-held values and its obligation to be present and to testify to those values and its mission.

## Location of ALA Events and the Importance of Affirming Core Values

The American Library Association (ALA) promotes and respects the basic human rights and intellectual freedom of all people. These values are articulated in the core values of librarianship (<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/corevalues>) and other policy statements. The Association and its members work in a complex and continually changing environment. There are governments and other bodies in all parts of the world – including the U.S. – that at any point may champion or oppose values held by the Association and many of its members. Indeed, at any point, they may champion one and oppose another. Despite this, we believe it is important to represent our members, our values, and the profession of librarianship at our conferences and professional meetings, regardless of the political environment, whenever we can, unless extraordinary circumstances dictate we cannot.

In a wide range of local circumstances, libraries and librarians seek to defend intellectual freedom, support equal access to information and literacy, and provide a vital platform for a democratic society. In all parts of the globe – including the U.S. – librarians and their allies may find themselves in conflict within their own community in their defense of these values.

We believe it is the ALA's responsibility to provide leadership and to actively advocate for our values in this global society – including the U.S. We believe we have a special responsibility to do so where free and open libraries do not exist or are not available at all, and where our efforts can further the development of libraries and support librarians that share our fundamental values. That responsibility extends to championing the essential value of equity at the heart of ALA's mission.

It is our conviction that the Association's promotion of libraries and the core values of librarianship has the capacity to transform those with whom we interact, as libraries have the capacity to transform individuals, communities, nations and the world. We believe our engagement in our nation and in the larger world has and will continue to make a difference. While there may be specific circumstances that compel another response, we believe our collective mission, wherever we go domestically or internationally, is to champion libraries, librarianship and the values they represent, in order to enhance education and provide equitable access to information for all.

Library events – wherever they take place – represent a critical platform from which to bear witness to ALA's values; to support local libraries, librarians and other allies seeking to build a more equitable and inclusive society; and, to reinforce the commitment of ALA members to continue the movement toward a more enlightened, just and sustainable world.