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# Coalition of Alberta Public Libraries Messaging Overview

Updated: April 13, 2026

## Elements and Use

This document includes all current and approved messaging to support the Coalition of Alberta Public Libraries (CAP Libraries) in its response to Bill 28.

- Key Messages
- Key Numbers
- FAQs

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## KEY MESSAGES

### Response to Bill 28

- The Coalition of Alberta Public Libraries (CAP Libraries) is strongly opposed to the proposed *Municipal Affairs and Housing Statutes Amendment Act (Bill 28)*, because it undermines free speech and expression, local decision-making, and the privacy of Albertans.
- This proposed legislation restricts your right to access material freely by allowing government to require proof of age in order to access material. This change will impact library users over the age of 18 as well.
- Bill 28 introduces expanded government oversight into public library operations and enables increased inspection of records, creating serious privacy concerns for Albertans.
- CAP Libraries remains eager to collaborate with the Province on practical, operational steps that address concerns, while respecting parental responsibility, local decision-making, and intellectual freedom.

### **This isn't about protecting kids – Libraries already do that. (Censorship / Privacy)**

- Public libraries already respect the rights of parents to make decisions for their children's reading and library use.
- This bill introduces parental approval requirements that could create new access barriers for blended families, grandparents, foster parents, and others who care for children.
- Restricting access to public library materials is censorship, regardless of whether these materials remain physically in library spaces.
- Libraries are committed to removing barriers, not adding more, and respecting the parent's right to make decisions around their children's use of the library and library materials.

**No Albertan should have their reading habits tracked, flagged, or monitored by any government body. That's not how a free society works. (Privacy)**

- These changes undermine longstanding protections that keep what you read private.

**82 per cent of Albertans trust their local public library to make appropriate decisions about what materials are available. (Protect Local Decision Making)**

- Public libraries are community-led institutions governed locally by publicly appointed boards and guided by professional standards.
- Libraries make decisions about collections and access at the local level, informed by community needs and professional judgement. What the community needs in Strathmore or Red Deer can be different than what people in Lethbridge or Medicine Hat need from their library.
- Recent polling by Janet Brown Opinion Research also showed that 69% of Albertans prefer decisions around materials be made by locally trained staff guided by local boards rather than through province-wide rules. The full poll details can be found at [caplibraries.ca](http://caplibraries.ca).

**This Bill requires library staff to serve as gatekeepers of access to books and materials. (Logistics)**

- Albertans believe in freedom, privacy, and trusting local communities to make local decisions. Bill 28 pulls us in the opposite direction — more control, more oversight, and less trust in local decision-making.
- Libraries — especially small rural ones — operate with small teams and tight budgets. This bill would force them to build new tracking systems and paperwork just to comply with the provincial requirements, taking resources away from books, programs, and services people actually use.

**About CAP Libraries**

- CAP Libraries represents 324 public library service points, serving 99 per cent of Albertans.
- Libraries are not optional amenities — they are essential public infrastructure that supports learning, employment, digital access, and social connection. Virtually every Albertan benefits from public libraries, from preschoolers to seniors.
- It is the responsibility of public libraries to guarantee and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity, including those which some members of society may consider to be unconventional, unpopular, or unacceptable.
- Public libraries and the Government of Alberta share many goals, beginning with a shared focus on building a strong and successful future for all Albertans.

**FAQs**

Does Bill 28 provide greater protection for children against exposure to sexually explicit materials?

No. Bill 28 will limit everyone's access to specific materials. Libraries already uphold the rights of parents to make decisions for their families, and direct users to age-appropriate materials. Restricting access to public library materials is censorship, regardless of whether these materials remain physically in library spaces.

Is the Government of Alberta banning books in public libraries?

Public libraries in Alberta view this proposed legislation as an act of censorship that would limit access to materials. While guidelines have not yet been shared, libraries are concerned that this could impede Albertans' access to hundreds of materials.

Why do public libraries have books that were banned in schools?

It's important to remember that school libraries and public libraries operate very differently. One key distinction is that public libraries do not operate *in loco parentis* (in place of parents). Parents and guardians are responsible for the materials and programs accessed by their children or teens and have the right to choose what is best for themselves and their own family.

#### Why are children accessing pornography in public libraries?

No public library collection in Alberta includes pornography. Accessing pornography in public library spaces is prohibited.

Collections in public libraries respond to a wide range of topics and trained library staff help connect patrons to developmentally appropriate materials. Collections for children and adults are also shelved separately. Public libraries uphold parental responsibility in determining the choices for their families.

You can learn more about our collections policy here ([link to individual library's relevant policy](#)).

#### Do libraries have to comply with this legislation?

Libraries are public bodies that are required to operate in accordance with the law. This legislation could also create a pathway for enforcement of guidelines and policy in library spaces. CAP Libraries remains eager to collaborate with the Province on practical, operational steps that address concerns, while respecting parental responsibility, local decision-making, and intellectual freedom.

#### Why did libraries in Alberta form a coalition?

Public libraries in Alberta are working together to champion the value and impact of libraries for our Province. Through greater collaboration and connection, libraries can better support each other and the needs of their respective communities.

#### How was CAP Libraries formed?

The coalition was formed following the passage of a resolution at Alberta Municipalities and the Rural Municipalities of Alberta to support increased funding for Alberta's public libraries, which was approved by a high majority vote of both organizations. Public libraries then united around collective advocacy for funding. At the same time, another issue emerged in September 2025 when school boards in Alberta responded to a government order to remove certain materials in their libraries. This initiated a new goal – to advocate for the value and role of public libraries as critical community spaces, and as organizations committed to the foundational value of intellectual freedom. CAP Libraries was formally launched with 18 signatories representing ten medium and large sized public libraries, one Cree Nation Library Board, and seven regional libraries in early 2026.

#### Which libraries belong to CAP Libraries?

CAP Libraries was formally launched with 18 signatories representing ten medium and large sized public libraries, one Cree Nation Library Board, and seven regional libraries. Current membership includes:

- Airdrie Public Library
- Calgary Public Library
- Chinook Arch Regional Library System
- Strathcona County Library
- Edmonton Public Library
- Grande Prairie Public Library
- Kehewin Cree Nation Community Library
- Lethbridge Public Library
- Marigold Library System
- Medicine Hat Public Library

- Northern Lights Library System
- Parkland Regional Library System
- Peace Library System
- Red Deer Public Library
- Shortgrass Library System
- St. Albert Public Library
- Wood Buffalo Regional Library
- Yellowhead Regional Library