

Expurgation of Library Resources

An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Expurgating library resources is a violation of the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*. Expurgation as defined by this Interpretation includes any deletion, excision, alteration, editing, or obliteration of any part of a library resource by administrators, employees, governing authorities, parent institutions (if any), or third party vendors when done for the purposes of censorship. Such action stands in violation of Articles I, II, and III of the *Library Bill of Rights*, which state that "Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation," "Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval," and "Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment."

The act of expurgation denies access to the complete work and the entire spectrum of ideas that the work is intended to express. This is censorship. Expurgation based on the premise that certain portions of a work may be harmful to minors is equally a violation of the *Library Bill of Rights*.

Expurgation without permission from the rights holder may violate the copyright provisions of the United States Code.

The decision of rights holders to alter or expurgate future versions of a work does not impose a duty on librarians to alter or expurgate earlier versions of a work. Librarians should resist such requests in the interest of historical preservation and opposition to censorship. Furthermore, librarians oppose expurgation of resources available through licensed collections. Expurgation of any library resource imposes a restriction, without regard to the rights and desires of all library users, by limiting access to ideas and information.

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