

Talking Points: Intellectual Freedom and Public Library Board Governance

2026 Ontario Municipal Elections

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA-FCAB) developed the following talking points on intellectual freedom and public library board governance, which the Ontario Library Association (OLA) and Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL) are sharing as a resource. These talking points are intended for library workers and allies to use in conversations with election candidates during the municipal election season.

Municipal elections are an important opportunity to reinforce:

- The role of public libraries in providing communities with access to a diversity of knowledge, perspectives, and viewpoints;
- The importance of library boards being able to fulfill their responsibilities independently; and
- The expertise of library staff in selecting, managing, and providing access to information.

Elevator Pitch

It's important that people in every community get to make their own choices about what they read and watch, and that those choices are private. I'm concerned about what the Alberta government is doing and don't want the same thing to happen here. There's no reason for the government to be involved in people's reading choices in Canada. Every censor calls themselves a protector, but make no mistake, this is censorship.

Key Talking Points

The Alberta government is interfering with how libraries operate by imposing province-wide restrictions on how people access library materials. We want to make sure this doesn't spread to other provinces and that individuals have the freedom to read what they choose.

Public libraries have local boards made up of community members, who decide with library staff on policy about what is available for borrowing and who can borrow it, thinking about their local community's diverse needs and interests and library ethics.



We want to make sure that in our province, public libraries continue to be locally governed and operated, and that people can make their own choices about what they read. Local library boards and municipal leaders know their communities best.

Public libraries have been enabling informed and engaged communities in Canada for more than 150 years through providing people with the freedom to read what they choose. Libraries are trusted organizations that support democracy.

If you are elected, we ask you to commit publicly to keeping public libraries local and to protecting every Canadian's freedom to read and watch what they choose.