



Luanne James <director@rclstn.org>

Relocation of children's materials to the adult section

Luanne James <director@rclstn.org>

Wed, Mar 18, 2026 at 1:46 PM

To: rcls-bod@rclstn.org

Cc: David Coutcher <dcoutcher@rclstn.org>, Luanne James <Director@rclstn.org>

Good afternoon everyone.

As the Director of the Rutherford County Library System (RCLS), I am professionally and ethically bound to uphold the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Public libraries serve as vital repositories of diverse ideas, both popular and unpopular. Restricting access to these materials through subjective relocation or removal constitutes a violation of the community's right to information and a direct infringement on the principles of free speech. Our libraries are funded by and for the citizens; therefore, the right to access information—free from government interference—is a protected hallmark of our democracy.

The 8-3 vote by the Library Board on March 16th to relocate over 100+ LGBTQIA children's titles to the adult section is a clear act of viewpoint discrimination. Furthermore, the vote to move the books was done without following the library's established Request for Reconsideration policy.

My duty to protect public access is not merely a personal opinion; it is a core tenet of the American Library Association's Code of Ethics. As an arm of the county government, the Board cannot legally limit the public's access to materials owned by the people based on the content of the ideas expressed within them.

Therefore, I will not comply with the Board's decision to relocate these books. Doing so would violate the First Amendment right of all citizens of Rutherford County and myself. Consequently, I would compromise my professional obligation to oppose government-mandated viewpoint discrimination.

I want you to know that I am more than willing to discuss this decision with members of the Board at any time. I trust you understand my position expressed in this letter. As the Director of RCLS, I must uphold the obligations owed to the citizens of Rutherford County, and in particular the duty owed by the public library to its patrons, to allow access to views expressed by authors to benefit the public's right to read and access protected speech.

Sincerely,

Luanne James

Luanne James, Director

Rutherford County Library System
105 W. Vine St.
Murfreesboro, TN 37130
office: (615) 893-4131
email: director@rclstn.org
www.rclstn.org



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"If this nation is to be wise as well as strong, if we are to achieve our destiny, then we need more ideas for more wise men reading more good books in more public libraries." -John F. Kennedy