



606-100 Arthur Street
Winnipeg, MB R3B 1H3

September 1, 2023

Wab Kinew
Leader of the Opposition
Room 172 Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Dear Mr. Kinew:

The board of the Manitoba Library Association (MLA) sends this letter in support of the tireless work, integrity, and professionalism of the South Central Regional Library (SCRL) and all Manitoba libraries who have been exposed to and harassed with calls for censorship and defunding of library collections.

We applaud those communities and their municipal councils who have issued statements of support for both the SCRL and for their own community library. Despite name-calling and bullying by a group of individuals emboldened by pseudo-legal claims and bigotry, SCRL continues to work tirelessly to uphold and protect intellectual freedom for their community.

From the *MLA Statement Regarding Calls for Censorship and Defunding of Public Libraries*, we uphold that:

- Library boards are the authority for governance and management of public libraries, and this includes developing and maintaining collection development policies for challenged materials. The authority and duties of public library boards are delegated under Manitoba's The Public Libraries Act.
- Library boards in Manitoba, and throughout Canada, develop and maintain collection policies that reflect universal principles of intellectual freedom. Library boards are collectively responsible for ensuring equitable and universal access.

Further, MLA upholds:

- Library boards and library workers are best suited for selecting library materials to be made accessible to their community.

- Library users rely on their own individual decisions and judgment of what library materials to consume or not, and should raise concerns regarding library materials to their local library for consideration. Libraries are public service environments, and engagement between users and workers should take place in a manner demonstrating respect.
- Library workers are deserving of respect and civility in delivery of services.

Regional and rural libraries seek clear direction and increased support from its provincial leaders. That clarity and support has been lacking, and we call upon you, Mr. Kinew, to ask what the Manitoba New Democratic Party will do to better support libraries and the library staff who continue to be harassed and bullied. These issues affect constituencies across Manitoba, including within Winnipeg.

We look forward to hearing back from you, and hearing your party's plans that ensure Manitoba libraries, library workers, and library boards are meaningfully supported to perform their duties in an effective and safe manner.

Yours sincerely,



President, Manitoba Library Association

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Attachment: MLA Statement Regarding Calls for Censorship