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ALA Chills Free Exercise of Democracy by Publicly Attacking Mom and Pop Groups Who Dare to Oppose ALA Influence That Endangers Children



The American Library Association [ALA] is on the attack to silence the few moms and pops who speak out against it. I did not know how to put it into words until I read yesterday's *Wall Street Journal*. Now I do.

ALA On the Attack Against Mom and Pop Groups

The top ranking member of the ALA's "Office for Intellectual Freedom" [OIF] recently attacked me (SafeLibraries) and numerous other mom and pop groups who have spoken out about how ALA policy has negatively affected their community and others. The attack was made to the public of West Bend, WI, in a crowded gymnasium and was based on a written attack that was distributed widely by the ALA. It was made by the then Acting Director of the ALA's OIF, **Deborah Caldwell-Stone**, pictured top right. It was filled with misinformation intended to undermine the credibility of the mom and pops so as to muffle their findings of how the ALA has been directly involved in misleading the members of that community. Indeed, the ALA was successful in its efforts and the children in that community remain exposed to harms it is legal to block.

***Wall Street Journal* Article on Shooting the Messenger**

Before I provide the exact wording of the ALA's attack, let me first present the *Wall Street Journal* article that has finally enabled me to explain exactly what the ALA has done and why. Afterwards, read the ALA's attack, keeping the *Wall Street Journal* article in mind.

In "[Don't Shoot the Pollster; Attacks on Scott Rasmussen and Fox News Show a Disturbing Attitude Toward Dissent](#)," by **Patrick Caddell** and **Douglas E. Schoen**, *Wall Street Journal*, 15 January 2010, p.A17, we learn how powerful organizations use "political intimidation" and "increasingly virulent attacks" to "undermine ... credibility, and thus muffle ... findings." If you are "willing to take on issues like ethics and corruption in ways no other[s] ... have been able to do" then "[t]he reaction against [you will be] strident and harsh." "[T]he message [is] clear: criticize the [powerful organization] at your peril."

The authors "view this unprecedented attempt to silence the media and to attack the credibility of unpopular polling as chilling to the free exercise of democracy." They say, "[t]he thing most feared is independence." They conclude by saying, "comments and recent attempts by the Democratic left to muzzle **Scott Rasmussen** reflect a disturbing trend in our politics: a tendency to try to stifle legitimate feedback about political concerns—particularly if the feedback is negative to the incumbent administration."

Transcript of ALA Attack on Mom and Pop Groups

Now, keeping the above in mind, please read the following, after which I will describe exactly what is incorrect, at least with respect to myself. This is part of a speech given by the ALA's Acting Director of the OIF, Deborah Caldwell-Stone, on 2 June 2009 in West Bend, WI:

In the past decade we have observed a more organized and more sophisticated efforts to remove books from schools and libraries. Several Internet-based groups and organizations exist that believe that educational institutions, and even the public library, should support particular values and causes by denying a forum to competing values and causes, thereby limiting access to ideas, opinion opinions, and information. These groups have made use of websites, blogs, and other Internet tools to identify so-called bad books and then to encourage and assist individuals who want to remove books from schools and libraries.

One such group is called [Parents Against Bad Books in Schools](#), or [PABBIS](#). PABBIS has campaigned for over a decade now to remove books from the Fairfax County schools in Virginia. It maintains a particular website that has nothing but lists and excerpts of books that they believe should not be shown to children. Ah, they provide this information to other groups to help them organize their own efforts to challenge books.

Another active group is [Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays & Gays](#), or [PFOX](#), whose website asks, quote, Tired of seeing only gay affirming books in your public library or your child's school library? You can change this. Ask your county, school, or city library to order books on unwanted same-sex attraction, the origins of homosexuality, or other ex-gay books. There's nothing wrong with this. Library patrons are entitled to ask their library to obtain books for their

interests. But what we're also seeing is this group advocating for the removal or restriction of books that they view as pro-homosexual as well as adding these books to the collection.

Another Internet-based organization is [SafeLibraries](#) which argues that libraries are dangerous places for children unless the library censors access to so-called "bad books" and the Internet. Operated by a single individual, this organization identifies library controversies and provides assistance to the individuals challenging books in the community's libraries. They have done this in over 25 communities that we have identified. Most often, SafeLibraries helps the individual mount a public campaign aimed at removing books from libraries and requiring the use of Internet filters. In full disclosure, SafeLibraries, as a matter of policy, opposes the intellectual freedom policies and privacy standards developed by the ASALA that are based on librarians' professional ethics and the First Amendment.

There are several other Internet-based library censorship advocates across the country. These include [Family Friendly Libraries](#); [Library Patrons of Montgomery County, Texas](#); [Grassroots American Values](#); [Pure Pioneers](#), and a group called [Know Your Library](#). Now, these groups appear to share information and tactics. For example, Know Your Library, based in St. Louis County, Missouri, just last year mounted a campaign that would ask the library to label all young adult novels as sexually explicit and to remove those books to the adult collection of the library.

Um, I'll be happy to take any questions if the Board has any for me at this point.

Listing of False Claims Made By the ALA to Undermine Credibility of Mom and Pop Groups; Office for Intellectual Freedom's Claim to Support Intellectual Freedom is Not Credible

Statement after statement in that report is either misleading or flatly false. The irony of the "Office for Intellectual Freedom" using completely false information to fool a local populace into leaving children exposed to harm is unbelievable. Let us go through this lie by lie:

"Several Internet-based groups and organizations exist that believe that educational institutions, and even the public library, should support particular values and causes by denying a forum to competing values and causes, thereby limiting access to ideas, opinion opinions, and information." False. Inappropriate material for children, almost always inappropriate for reasons of extreme sexuality such as graphic anal rape, has nothing to do with "denying a forum to competing values and causes" or "limiting access to ideas, ... opinions, and information." Is anal rape an idea or an opinion?

In addition, the US Supreme Court recognizes, in [US v. ALA](#), a case the ALA itself lost, "[The interest in protecting young library users from material inappropriate for minors is legitimate, and even compelling, as all Members of the Court appear to agree.](#)" Legitimate, and even compelling. Now unless the ALA wants to proclaim that the US Supreme Court is "denying a

forum to competing values and causes" or "limiting access to ideas, ... opinions, and information," then the ALA cannot conclude that efforts to open the eyes of communities to the words of the US Supreme Court is wrong. So the ALA's statement here is 100% false.

Another lie: "[PABBIS] maintains a particular website that has nothing but lists and excerpts of books that they believe should not be shown to children." 100% false. A simple look at the web site will tell you that instantly. There's more there than just lists and excerpts. Further, PABBIS says:

[Bad is not for us to determine. Bad is what you determine is bad. Bad is what you think is bad for your child. What each parent considers bad varies and depends on their unique situation, family and values. The main purpose of this webpage is to identify some books that might be considered bad and why someone might consider them bad.](#)

There is absolutely nothing wrong with that, the ALA knows it, but the ALA instead chooses to say PABBIS lists "books that they believe should not be shown to children." False. The obvious effort is to undermine PABBIS's credibility.

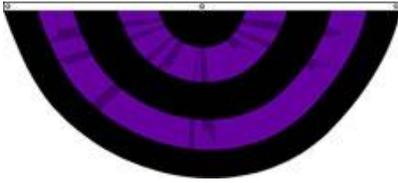
These lies are not mistakes. The ALA has been monitoring groups like PABBIS for a very long time. It has thoroughly reviewed their web sites. Yet it makes statements that are 100% false, but that are effective in misleading local communities. The ALA and its "Office for Intellectual Freedom" clearly do not practice intellectual freedom, unless that means lying to fool people. And the lies continue—let's go on, this time the [Eye of Mordor](#) turns to SafeLibraries:

"Another Internet-based organization is SafeLibraries which argues that libraries are dangerous places for children unless the library censors access to so-called 'bad books' and the Internet." First, [I oppose censorship](#)—recommending communities read US v. ALA is not censorship, and neither is using Internet filters in compliance with US v. ALA. So why the "censor" reference if it is false?

Second, my concern is not with "bad books," rather it is with [advising communities that the ALA recommends books containing inappropriate material for children without providing adequate notice](#) to the very parents the ALA claims should be responsible for their own children. Let them be responsible by consulting ALA lists or awards and their children still get exposed to inappropriate material. In one case, for example, [I got the author of an ALA award winning book to admit he would not give his own book to his own 12 year old if he had one](#), yet the ALA recommended it for 12 year olds with no notice that it contained oral sex and was otherwise pervasively vulgar.

And the claim that I oppose "bad books" is false for another reason. See how the ALA references "so called 'bad books'"? That statement means I called the books "bad books." I have never said that and I never will. In all my years of writing on this topic I have done that not once. Go ahead. Search for the phrase "bad books" on my up-to-the-minute Safelibraries blog ([search the blog here](#)), Safelibraries.org ([search the web site here](#)), or my much older and outdated Plan2Succeed.org ([search the old web site here](#)). You will find hits only referencing the PABBIS name spelled out or the title of a radio broadcast on which I appeared. Not a single time do I talk about "bad books." Not once. I challenge the ALA to show me and Google where

I reference "bad books."



The next statement burns me up the most. "Operated by a single individual, this ... organization identifies library controversies and provides assistance to the individuals challenging books in the community's libraries." A single individual? I used to have a partner, Mark Decker, RIP. He [died in a tragic car accident](#). He tried to stop the library in Oak Lawn, IL, from making *Playboy* magazine available to children. I helped him. We launched SafeLibraries.org. He came up with the name, for example. He did so much to protect the children, culminating in his village government asking the library to drop the *Playboy* subscription. The [ALA's OIF rode to the rescue to ensure the magazine remained available to children](#), yet here it is commenting that I'm the only member of SafeLibraries. That really burns me up. What total disrespect for Mark Decker. The ALA does not have to laud Mark Decker, but to leave him out as it did in this circumstance is particularly cold and cruel. And I am the bad guy for having "done this in over 25 communities that we have identified." I guess the goal of undermining my credibility trumps respect for the dead.

Next stop, the First Amendment lie: "In full disclosure, SafeLibraries, as a matter of policy, opposes the intellectual freedom policies and privacy standards developed by the AS ALA that are based on librarians' professional ethics and the First Amendment." That is false, but cleverly so. It is false because of the tying together of "librarians' professional ethics" with "the First Amendment," as if they were equivalent. Is it wrong to point out that library privacy policies should not trump national security? Am I not allowed to point out the *New York Times* article where [the de facto leader of the ALA](#) wished a Delray Beach, FL, librarian had [followed library privacy laws instead of turning in a 9/11 terrorist's library activities to the police](#) days after 9/11? Does that oppose intellectual freedom policies but lying about me doesn't? Doesn't a statement such as that "undermine [my] credibility, and thus muffle [my] findings"? Of course. It is false, but the ALA's OIF doesn't let truth stand in the way of getting what it wants.



LAWYERS FOR LIBRARIES Now after besmirching me, PABBIS, and PFOX, the ALA goes on to pile on others, obviously to say they are just as bad—after all, they are "library censorship advocates," aren't they? "There are several other Internet-based library censorship advocates across the country. These include Family Friendly Libraries; Library Patrons of Montgomery County, Texas; Grassroots American Values; Pure Pioneers, and a group called Know Your Library. Now, these groups appear to share information and tactics." Share tactics? The [ALA holds seminars on sharing tactics but refused to allow me to attend](#)! And a few mom and pops around the country are evil for "sharing information and tactics"? Did the "Office for Intellectual Freedom" really say that? Is the OIF's interest in intellectual freedom credible? No.

Watch this lie—this one is the cleverest of all: "For example, Know Your Library, based in St.

Louis County, ... Missouri, just last year mounted a campaign that would ask the library to label all young adult novels as sexually explicit and to remove those books to the adult collection of the library." Not only is that 100% false, but the ALA does not reveal that as a result of the actual activity, the library itself moved one book on its own, then two more were moved as requested by the group. Why? Because it was the right thing to do! I know because [I spoke with one of the authors of one of the books that were moved](#). Yet here the ALA misleads people about the truth then leaves out the full story that would have shown the group to be successful.

The ALA Lies Were Intentional; The Propaganda Fooled the Public

These lies are not mere misstatements made off the top of someone's head while giving a speech. The speech was based on years of experience by the experienced Deputy/Acting Director of the ALA's OIF, was placed in written form, distributed widely, then personally read with limited variation from the script at a public meeting in a packed gymnasium. There is no mistake. The ALA flat out lied, knowingly and purposefully, with intent to deceive. Further, since the library board voted in accordance with the ALA's guidance, ignored the "library censorship advocates," and many in the community believed the ALA's misinformation, the ALA's propaganda worked and worked well.

Conclusion Based On the *Wall Street Journal* Article

Now let's go back to the *Wall Street Journal* article. Like what Pat Caddell and Doug Schoen reported about how Scott Rasmussen is being besmirched, isn't the ALA using "intimidation" and "increasingly virulent attacks" (calling people "censors" and First Amendment opposers) to "undermine ... credibility, and thus muffle ... findings"?

I have been "willing to take on issues and corruption in ways no other[s] ... have been able to do." (Like my exposing of the [\\$2.5M fraud at the Brooklyn Public Library](#), the [\\$.5M Fraud at the Brownsville Public Library](#), the [whitewashing of rape by the ALA](#) that resulted in the ALA correcting the title and text of an article in its monthly magazine, or the [ALA's ignoring Afro-Cuban civil rights](#), etc.) Here are [my blog posts about West Bend, WI](#). Has not the ALA's reaction been "harsh and strident." 100% false lies is harsh and strident, is it not? Clearly the message is "criticize the [ALA] at your peril," is it not?

And here's the worst part. The Office for Intellectual Freedom's "comments and recent attempts ... to muzzle [me and numerous moms and pops] reflect[s] a disturbing trend ... a tendency to try to stifle legitimate feedback ...—particularly if the feedback is negative to the [ALA]." That the OIF would muzzle anyone is astounding. How it continues to get away with this again and again is beyond my pay grade.

One thing is clear. "[T]his unprecedented attempt to silence the ['library censorship advocates'] and to attack the credibility of unpopular [views is] chilling to the free exercise of democracy."

The ALA's OIF is Chilling the Free Exercise of Democracy

The ALA's OIF is chilling the free exercise of democracy. Communities have a right to hear opposing viewpoints or file complaints under existing materials reconsideration policies without those people being labeled as "censors" or otherwise besmirched. I thank Pat Caddell and Doug Schoen for indirectly helping me to understand what the ALA is doing and why. How ironic the "Office for Intellectual Freedom" is the offending party.