

# Resolution

**WHEREAS**, book banning and censorship have existed throughout the history of written works, a practice most notably observed in the 1860s and Jim Crow Era when Southern states prohibited abolitionist literature, and in the 1930s when Nazis burned over 25,000 books seen as “un-German;” and

**WHEREAS**, Harris County is committed to learning from past injustices and not repeating them; and

**WHEREAS**, the freedom to read is under threat across the nation, and nowhere more so than in the state of Texas which challenged 2,349 books, of which at least 511 were removed from school libraries and classrooms in 2022, and is on pace to once again lead the nation in challenging and removing books in 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, House Bill 900, which passed in the 88th Texas Legislature, requires vendors to assign book ratings based on appropriateness and places an unfair burden on booksellers, and the bill’s vague language serves as a tactic to intimidate teachers, librarians, and publishers into erring on the side of caution; and

**WHEREAS**, the Harris County Public Library (HCPL) is committed to protecting the rights of all individuals of all ages, to use the library’s resources and services, and to defend the freedom to speak, think, and read as they choose, which are guaranteed rights by the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, HCPL staff are dedicated to the principle of free and equitable access to information and knowledge, and deserve to pursue their calling free from harassment and intimidation, and Harris County is committed to their protection; and

**WHEREAS**, the HCPL would like to serve as a Book Sanctuary to preserve ‘Texans’ right to read by collecting and protecting endangered books by making them available to the public, by fostering discussion about challenged and diverse books to promote understanding and mutual respect, and by educating the public about current and past efforts to censor and ban books; and

**WHEREAS**, the HCPL is joining a network of over 2,780 established Book Sanctuaries across the United States committed to supporting intellectual freedom and opposing censorship and any effort to coerce belief or suppress opinion: now, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** that Harris County Commissioners Court hereby supports the Harris County Public Library as a

## BOOK SANCTUARY

to combat censorship, defend intellectual freedom, and protect the right to read.

It is hereby **ORDERED** that this Resolution be spread upon the minutes of Commissioners Court this 19th day of September 2023.

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**LINA HIDALGO, County Judge**

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**RODNEY ELLIS, Commissioner**  
Precinct One

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**ADRIAN GARCIA, Commissioner**  
Precinct Two

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**TOM S. RAMSEY, P.E., Commissioner**  
Precinct Three

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**LESLEY BRIONES, Commissioner**  
Precinct Four

ATTEST:

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Teneshia Hudspeth, County Clerk  
Harris County, T E X A S