

**Arrowhead Library System**  
**Procedures for Handling Patron Complaints about**  
**Library Materials**, adopted by the ALS Governing  
Board, March 11, 1993

**1. Introduction**

- a. ALS headquarters staff and member library directors should be aware of the ALS Materials Selection Policy revised and adopted by the Governing Board March 11, 1993. The policy contains sections on controversial materials and a statement for dealing with challenged materials. The procedures below are internal staff procedures for handling patron concerns and complaints.

**2. Receiving Questions or Complaints**

- a. Any staff member receiving a question or complaint about books or other materials should inform the patron that all ALS materials are professionally selected according to the current selection policy. Staff members should be courteous and calm and not attempt to debate the merits of the work in question with the patron. The patron should be invited to communicate his or her concerns to the ALS director. If the patron wishes to put the complaint in writing, he or she should be given a copy of the form "Statement of Concern About Library Resources" and asked to submit the completed form to the ALS Director. All ALS personnel dealing with the public and member libraries will have a supply of the forms. Staff members will notify their supervisors as soon as possible of any complaint or challenge, and member libraries should notify their governing boards of trustees.

**3. Internal Procedures**

- a. Upon receiving a "Statement of Concern About Library Materials," the Director will review the complaint with appropriate staff members. Facts of the selection will be researched and documented: the reason the item was selected, review sources, relevance to ALS collection and mission. The item will be reviewed in terms of the library's materials selection policy and the Library Bill of Rights. A decision will be made by the ALS Director, who will also make a written response to the complainant. This

response will include a copy of the ALS Selection Policy with supporting documents and additional data concerning the questioned work. The ALS Governing Board shall be apprised of any serious problems, but it is expected that most questions and complaints will be handled by the Director and staff. Any complainant may appeal a decision by the director to the ALS Governing Board whose decision in the matter shall be final.

**Statement of Concern About Library Resources**, adopted by the  
ALS Governing Board, March 11, 1993

The Arrowhead Library System Governing Board has authorized use of this form in accordance with its written selection policy and administrative procedures. Form should be returned to the Arrowhead Library System Director.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

\_\_\_\_\_ Book

\_\_\_\_\_ Audiovisual Resource

\_\_\_\_\_ Magazine

\_\_\_\_\_ Content of Library Program

\_\_\_\_\_ Newspaper

\_\_\_\_\_ Other

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author/Producer \_\_\_\_\_

2. What brought this title to your attention?

3. Please comment on the resource as a whole as well as being specific on those matters which concern you. (Use other side if needed.)

Comment:

Optional

4. What resource(s) do you suggest to provide additional information on this

topic?

Revised by the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee, January 12, 1983.