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Dear Patrons,

The State of Ohio is in the midst of passing House Bill 96, our government's budget for Fiscal Year 26-27. The bill has been approved by both the House and the Senate and is now on the Governor's desk awaiting his approval. Beyond our budget cuts, buried in the text is a provision that will significantly impact library operations.

Sec. 3375.47 states a public library "created under Chapter 3375 of the Revised Code shall place material related to sexual orientation or gender identity or expression in a portion of the public library that is not primarily open to the view of persons under the age of eighteen."

Clearly, this is censorship.

At the library people are free to choose what they like from the collection, to reject what they don't like, but not to restrict the freedom of others to choose.

Decisions about what materials are suitable for children should be made by the people who know them best - their parents or guardians. This provision would force library staff to act "in loco parentis." Michelle Francis, Executive Director of the Ohio Library Council, states the crux of the issue clearly. "This language is dangerously vague, overly broad, and ultimately unworkable. It opens the door to unconstitutional censorship and undermines the core mission of libraries—to provide free and open access to information."

Governor DeWine will sign the budget bill into law within the next few days in time for the start of the new fiscal year on July 1st. Time is of the essence. If you, like the leadership of the Burton Public Library, are concerned by ORC Section 3375.47 in House Bill 96, please respectfully urge Governor DeWine to veto this provision related to library materials. We feel parents know what is best for their children and consider this an unfunded mandate.

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Thank you for your consideration.