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Georgia Library Association - Advocacy Committee

Angela Glowcheski

Sequoyah Regional Library System, glowcheskia@seqlib.org

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*People, Libraries
and Agencies* **IN THE NEWS**

Georgia Library Association Advocacy Committee

Representing all Georgia libraries, the primary charge of the Georgia Library Association (GLA) Advocacy Committee is to maintain and grow the relationship between libraries and statewide legislative efforts. This involves working to understand the needs of legislators and legislative groups, as well as discovering ways to effectively communicate the goals and needs of libraries to these legislative groups and individuals.

This summer and fall, 2021, the Advocacy Committee has been coordinating advocacy efforts with other organizations and groups. Working with the Georgia Library Media Association (GLMA), the committee crafted a Freedom to Read Resolution, which kicked off a Freedom to Read Georgia campaign. Freedom to Read Georgia is a joint effort of the GLMA, GLA, the Georgia Council of Teachers of English, the Georgia Association for Instructional Technology, and the Georgia Council for the Social Studies. The launch date corresponded with Banned Books Week (September 26–October 2, 2021). In the spirit of Banned Books Week, the Freedom to Read Campaign seeks to bring the community together in shared support of the freedom to seek and to express ideas. The campaign is meant to increase awareness of protecting freedom in reading choices and equitable access for all Georgians. Freedom to Read Georgia features a corresponding writing and video contest for K–12 students. This contest concluded October 31, 2021.



It is imperative that everyone increases awareness around the freedom to read. Last year, during the legislative session, the Advocacy Committee worked with GLMA in the “Vote No on SB 226” awareness campaign. SB 226 is a bill which sought to enact a penalty for the distribution of harmful materials in school libraries and called for an oversight committee in the review of materials in a school library. It aimed to create a new law for a process which is currently implemented in school districts across the state under a Georgia Department of Education (DOE) rule and with which very few problems have been reported. This bill would create state-level mandates rather than afford this local control of parties involved, time frame limits for responses, and appeals processes.

Additional information about Freedom to Read Georgia, including resources and guidelines for the writing and video contest, can be found at <https://bit.ly/freedomtoreadga>.

Working with the Intellectual Freedom Interest Group, the committee has drafted a Resolution in Support of Broadband as a Human Right (approved by the GLA Executive Board in April 2021). The committee has shared the resolution with other memberships, asking them to sign on to this as well. Many of them are in discussion with their executive boards. For the groups that sign up, the plan is to have a joint release of the statement later in October 2021.

The Advocacy Committee is always looking for engaged committee members. To learn more about how to get involved, please contact the committee chair at advocacy@georgialibraryassociation.org.