

FREEDOM TO READ DAY OF ACTION

GUIDANCE FOR EVENT ORGANIZERS & SPEAKERS

Unite Against Book Bans is a national campaign led by the American Library Association. As a 501(c)(3), ALA, and its Unite campaign, does not support or oppose candidates for political office or any political party.

The Freedom to Read Community Day of Action has been created to support neutral and nonpartisan events in libraries and other community organizations. Organizations that use the available supporting materials should be mindful of their particular tax code restrictions; events hosted by 501(c)(3) organizations, publicly funded institutions, and others should avoid conducting events in a biased manner that favors or opposes one or more candidates or political parties.

Please provide these instructions to speakers when you invite them to speak and again, as a reminder, the day before the event.

To demonstrate the impartial nature of your program or event, all speakers should:

- avoid naming or depicting any candidates or political parties;
- limit all remarks to urging actions such as voting and registering and describing the hours and places of registration and voting;
- avoid making any partisan statements or desired or preferred results of the outcome of any election—not even statements with a wink-and-nod to a preferred outcome;
- recognize that truly neutral language may motivate voters on either side of an issue or election;
- only speak about targeting geographic areas based on neutral and nonpartisan criteria such as areas with demonstrated low-income, minority, low-turnout, homeless or student populations;
- avoid any consideration or reference to the need for increased turnout or where races may be particularly close;
- make materials and information available to all individuals who attend and are in an area without regard for a voter's political preference; and,
- not use any lists to create a crowd with preferences or targeted toward voters who support a particular political party or candidate on the ballot or in past elections.

If a speaker at your event starts to talk in favor of or against a particular candidate or party, your event emcee should be prepared to interrupt and make clear that this is a nonpartisan event. If this happens, you should communicate in writing with the speaker after the event to explain why they were interrupted and make clear that they will not be invited to speak at your events in future.

