

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, public libraries are among our nation's oldest democratic institutions, providing free and equitable access to information, ideas, culture, and lifelong learning for people of every age, background, and viewpoint; and

WHEREAS, the freedom to read and seek information is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States and is fundamental to an informed, engaged, and democratic society; and

WHEREAS, throughout history, governments and other authorities have sought to suppress ideas through censorship and book bans, including restrictions on abolitionist literature before and during the Civil War, censorship during the Jim Crow era, and the destruction of books by authoritarian regimes, demonstrating that efforts to restrict access to knowledge have often accompanied attacks on democracy and civil rights; and

WHEREAS, across the nation, in Texas, and within our own community, libraries have experienced increasing challenges to materials in their collections, including efforts to restrict access to works that address race, history, gender, sexuality, and other topics reflecting the diversity of the human experience; and

WHEREAS, public libraries are not merely community amenities but essential civic institutions that safeguard the free exchange of ideas, preserve our shared history, foster civic engagement, and ensure every resident has access to a broad range of viewpoints; and

WHEREAS, Council is committed to ensuring open access and supporting free inquiry at the Austin Public Library (APL); and

24 **WHEREAS**, APL is an institution committed to providing free and
25 equitable access to information and to developing collections through professional
26 standards, established collection development policies, and the expertise of trained
27 library professionals who serve the informational, educational, and recreational
28 needs of Austin's diverse community; and

29 **WHEREAS**, in 2022, Council affirmed its commitment to intellectual
30 freedom through its Freedom to Read Resolution No. 20220901-86, recognizing
31 that access to diverse ideas and perspectives strengthens civic participation,
32 education, and democracy; and

33 **WHEREAS**, the Austin Library Commission has recommended that the
34 City of Austin be designated a Book Safe Harbor to reaffirm Austin's longstanding
35 commitment to intellectual freedom, open access to information, and the freedom
36 to read; and

37 **WHEREAS**, the City of Austin is committed to ensuring that its public
38 libraries remain safe, welcoming places where every member of the community
39 can learn, explore, discover, and engage with ideas from across the spectrum of
40 human intellect and creativity; and

41 **WHEREAS**, 2026 marks the centennial of APL, celebrating 100 years of
42 learning, connection, exploration, and possibility; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

43 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**

44 Council hereby designates the City of Austin as a Book Safe Harbor,
45 signifying the City's commitment to safeguarding equitable access to library
46 materials, protecting the community's freedom to read, and upholding established

47 policies and processes that ensure thoughtful and transparent consideration of any
48 concerns regarding library materials.

49 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

50 Council supports APL's existing collection and reconsideration policies and
51 endorses the expertise of library staff in selecting, maintaining, and evaluating
52 library materials in accordance with established professional standards.

53 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

54 Council reaffirms its commitment to ensuring Austin's public libraries
55 remain welcoming, inclusive spaces where all people are free to read, learn, and
56 explore ideas.

57
58 **ADOPTED:** _____, 2026

59 **ATTEST:** _____
60 Erika Brady
61 City Clerk