

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

P.O. BOX 750 • MADISON, WI 53701 • (608) 256-8900 • WWW.FFRF.ORG

June 26, 2025

SENT VIA U.S. MAIL ONLY

Waupun Public Library Board
201 E. Main Street
Waupun, WI 53963

Re: Support for Waupun Public Library's Pride display and commitment to inclusivity

Dear Library Board members:

I am writing on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) to express our support for the Waupun Public Library's Pride display and to encourage the Board to maintain a neutral display policy ensuring that the Library remains a welcoming place for everyone. FFRF is a national nonprofit organization with more than 42,000 members across the country, including over 1,800 members and its national headquarters in Wisconsin. Our purposes are to protect the constitutional principle of separation between state and church, and to educate the public on matters relating to nontheism.

It is our understanding that a local pastor, Forsell Gappa, has launched a crusade against the Waupun Public Library's decision to create a Pride display for Pride Month celebrating the LGBTQ+ community. We understand that Pastor Gappa and a few others recently attended a library board meeting to attack the display where Gappa made disparaging remarks about LGBTQ people: "Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth... This means to love people, you are not to love their sin. ... Each letter in the LGBTQ acronym represents wrongdoing. It has become the periodic table of sexual sins."¹ We understand someone else called the library a "grooming factory."

We write to request that you don't give in to these religiously-motivated objections and that you continue to maintain a neutral display policy that supports *all* members of the Waupun community whether they be LGBTQ, nonreligious, or a member of any other minority group. The Library shouldn't be in the business of censoring materials based on the religious objections of a few individuals.

It is a basic constitutional principle that the government cannot show favoritism toward religion. The First Amendment's Establishment Clause requires that the government remain neutral between religion and religion, and between religion and nonreligion. *See McCreary Cnty., Ky. v. ACLU of Ky.*, 545 U.S. 844, 860 (2005); *Wallace v. Jaffree*, 472 U.S. 38, 53 (1985); *Epperson v. Arkansas*, 393 U.S. 97, 104 (1968); *Everson v. Bd. of Ed. of Ewing*, 330 U.S. 1, 15–16 (1947).

¹ https://wiscnews.com/news/community/bdc/article_83e7e75b-17a0-4468-80d4-b3da9a60cc6e.html.

FFRF advocates, above all, for freedom of thought. We oppose banning books from public schools and libraries. There's no true freedom of thought, conscience or even religion, unless our government and its public schools and libraries are free from religion and its control over thought.

We respectfully urge the Board to reject calls to remove or censor Pride materials and instead affirm the library's role as a safe and inclusive space for all, including LGBTQ patrons and other often-marginalized groups. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Line", with a stylized, flowing script.

Christopher Line
Legal Counsel
Freedom From Religion Foundation