

Indiana Library Federation Statement on Indiana Senate Bill 202

The Indiana Library Federation (ILF) opposes Senate Bill 202 (SB202) for the long-term impact it will have on state-funded academic institutions.

SB202 politicizes and threatens the current system of tenure and promotion for university and college faculty members. In many academic institutions, librarians are members of the faculty, serving crucial roles in the teaching and learning missions of their campuses. Through the system of tenure and promotion, faculty librarians share in the same protections of academic and intellectual freedom that extend to their teaching-faculty colleagues. These protections allow academic librarians to build collections and services relevant to the missions of their institutions, while also protecting them in their roles as educators both inside and outside the traditional classroom setting. This bill will undermine those protections and will have detrimental consequences for higher education in the state of Indiana.

SB202 will also have negative consequences for Library & Information Science (LIS) graduate programs offered by universities and colleges in the state. LIS faculty are responsible for educating and credentialing future librarians, including those planning to live in the state and work in Indiana's academic, public, school, and specialty libraries. Politicizing and undermining the current system of tenure and promotion will hurt the academic rigor of these programs, which will negatively impact future librarians, library users, and the communities they serve.

A respect for the system of tenure and promotion has been a crucial factor in Indiana being able to establish itself as a leader in public higher education. Robust protections afforded by academic and intellectual freedom attract highly qualified LIS and library faculty from all over the world. Undermining these protections, as SB202 does, will make recruiting, hiring, and retaining faculty even more challenging, as candidates choose to make their professional homes in states that respect tenure and promotion.

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