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Testimony of Jeannette Bair to the Working Group on the Status of Libraries in Vermont

Intellectual freedom is under attack at Vermont State College Libraries.

Most of us have been watching censorship in school and public libraries in some states around the country with alarm. Banning books, criminally charging librarians for circulating pornography to children, and more.

We think that we enjoy protection of intellectual freedom here in the great state of Vermont.

“That’s not happening here,” we smugly think. Here in Vermont individual books or authors are not being attacked and removed from libraries.

I was gobsmacked with the announcement that the state college libraries are simply removing the majority of the books from their libraries. In one fell swoop, eliminating student’s access to tens of thousands of volumes now held in college libraries.

While the move to remove print books is a foolhardy attempt to save the colleges money, this is certainly a wholesale attack on intellectual freedom. There is no replacement for browsing the stacks to stumble upon the amazing book you never knew existed. Once gone, these collections can never be replaced.

The Chancellor, the board of trustees of the VSC, state legislators, and the governor all need to act to stop this attack on college libraries and the intellectual freedom of students.