

December 6, 2018

Vancouver Public Library Board
350 West Georgia Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 6B1

Dear Ms Epstein, Board Chair, and Board Members,

The Canadian Urban Library Council / Conseil des Bibliothèques Urbaines du Canada members support Vancouver Public Library's decision to allow Feminist Current to rent a meeting room at Vancouver Public Library (VPL) in accordance with VPL Board policy. This policy states explicitly that: "Statements being made or positions being taken during meetings do not necessarily reflect the opinions or values of the Vancouver Public Library Board." Additionally, the policy states: "The renter and/or the program presenter will agree not to contravene the Criminal Code of Canada and the Human Rights Act of British Columbia during the course of their rental/program, and this statement will be included in any rental contract."

While some of the views espoused by the Feminist Current are distasteful and contrary to the values of diversity and inclusion that public libraries uphold and promote, public libraries must nevertheless continue to defend the fundamental right of law-abiding citizens to access public library spaces, including meeting rooms.

Furthermore, intellectual freedom and freedom of speech are essential to a democratic society, and public libraries must continue to protect these rights for all, even when views are contrary or offensive to those held by most individuals in society including most library staff.

VPL has taken many steps to promote diversity and inclusion in their spaces and services, and in fact has taken proactive measures to ensure that Feminist Current does not breach the Criminal Code.

Every individual, no matter what their background, opinions, and/or beliefs, has the right to freedom of expression and the right to access library services and spaces, permitting their conduct complies with all applicable laws and library policies. These concepts are articulated in the Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries approved by the Canadian Federation of Library Associations / La Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques, and in VPL's values as endorsed by the VPL Board.

While it is recognized that some ideas expressed through library collections, programs, events and organizations that rent meeting rooms may, on occasion, be offensive to some or even many library users, it is imperative that public libraries continue to uphold the rights and values of intellectual freedom and freedom of expression which are fundamental to a democratic society.

Sincerely,



Pilar Martinez
Chair, Canadian Urban Libraries Council / Conseil des Bibliothèques Urbaines du Canada (CULC/CBUC)
CEO, Edmonton Public Library, on behalf of:

Alvin M. Schrader, Professor Emeritus, School of Library and Information Studies, University of Alberta
And the members of CULC/CBUC

Alberta

Bill Ptacek, Chief Executive Officer, Calgary Public Library
Shelley Ross, Chief Executive Officer, Red Deer Public Library
Melissa Flett, Director, Wood Buffalo Regional Library

British Columbia

Beth Davies, Chief Librarian, Burnaby Public Library
Todd Gnisso, Executive Director, Coquitlam Public Library
Scott Hargrove, Chief Executive Officer, Fraser Valley Regional Library
Maureen Sawa, Chief Executive Officer, Greater Victoria Public Library
Susan Walters, Chief Librarian, Richmond Public Library
Surinder Bhogal, Chief Librarian, Surrey Libraries
Rosemary Bonanno, Executive Director, Vancouver Island Regional Library

Manitoba

Ed Cuddy, Manager of Library Services, Winnipeg Public Library

New Brunswick

Sylvie Nadeau, Executive Director, New Brunswick Public Library Service

Nova Scotia

Åsa Kachan, Chief Librarian & Chief Executive Officer, Halifax Public Libraries

Ontario

Lauren Jessop, Chief Executive Officer, Barrie Public Library
Rebecca Raven, Chief Executive Officer, Brampton Library
Lita Barrie, Chief Executive Officer, Burlington Public Library
Steve Kraft, Chief Executive Officer, Guelph Public Library
Paul Takala, Chief Librarian, Hamilton Public Library
Helen Kelly, Chief Executive Officer, Idea Exchange – Cambridge
Patricia Enright, Chief Librarian & Chief Executive Officer, Kingston Frontenac Public Library Service
Mary Chevreau, Chief Executive Officer, Kitchener Public Library
Susanna Hubbard Krimmer, Chief Executive Officer, London Public Library
Catherine Biss, Chief Executive Officer, Markham Public Libraries
Mark Williams, Chief Librarian, Milton Public Library
Lori Kelly, Director, Mississauga Library System
Tara Wong, Chief Executive Officer, Oakville Public Library
Frances Newman, Chief Executive Officer, Oshawa Public Library
Danielle McDonald, Chief Executive Officer, Ottawa Public Library
Louise Procter Maio, Chief Executive Officer, Richmond Hill Public Library
Lilita Stripnieks, Chief Executive Officer, St. Catharines Public Library
John Pateman, Chief Executive Officer, Thunder Bay Public Library
Vickery Bowles, City Librarian, Toronto Public Library
Margie Singleton, Chief Executive Officer, Vaughan Public Libraries
Laurie Clarke, Chief Executive Officer, Waterloo Public Library
Rhonda Jessup, Chief Librarian & Chief Executive Officer, Whitby Public Library
Kitty Pope, Chief Executive Officer, Windsor Public Library

Quebec

Jean-François Roulier, Chef de division Planification et expertise Bibliothèques de Laval
Ivan Filion, Directeur, Bibliothèque de Montréal
Danielle Chagnon, Directrice générale, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec
Carol Laguë, Chef de division, Bibliothèque municipale de Gatineau

Saskatchewan

Jeff Barber, Chief Executive Officer, Regina Public Library
Carol Cooley, Director of Libraries & Chief Executive Officer, Saskatoon Public Library

cc Jefferson Gilbert, Executive Director, Canadian Urban Libraries Council / Conseil des Bibliothèques Urbaines du Canada (CULC/CBUC)
Christina de Castell, Chief Librarian, Vancouver Public Library