

**CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS
AGENDA ITEM
AGENDA SUMMARY FORM**

DEPARTMENT: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

AGENDA DATE: February 1, 2022

CONTACT PERSON NAME AND PHONE NUMBER:

City Representative Aleksandra Anello, 212-0002

DISTRICT(S) AFFECTED: All

STRATEGIC GOAL: (Goal 4 - Enhance El Paso's Quality of Life through Recreational, Cultural and Educational Environments)

SUBJECT:

APPROVE a resolution / ordinance / lease to do what? OR AUTHORIZE the City Manager to do what? Be descriptive of what we want Council to approve. Include \$ amount if applicable.

Discussion and action to direct the City Manager to have the El Paso Library Services create a section in each library composed of banned books to be made available to all residents of El Paso.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION:

Discussion of the what, why, where, when, and how to enable Council to have reasonably complete description of the contemplated action. This should include attachment of bid tabulation, or ordinance or resolution if appropriate. What are the benefits to the City of this action? What are the citizen concerns?

State of Texas leadership has banned literary classics from schools such as but is not limited to the following:

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck
The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas
Middlesex by Jeffrey Eugenides
The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood
And Still I Rise : Black America since MLK : an illustrated chronology by Henry Louis Gates, Jr.
The Indian Removal Act and the Trail of Tears by Susan E. Hamen
Stamped from the Beginning : the Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America
by Ibram X. Kendi and Jason Reynolds

It is important to make sure titles such as these available to all residents because of their thought-provoking nature and ability to advance educational attainment.

PRIOR COUNCIL ACTION:

Has the Council previously considered this item or a closely related one?

N/A

AMOUNT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

How will this item be funded? Has the item been budgeted? If so, identify funding source by account numbers and description of account. Does it require a budget transfer?

N/A

*******REQUIRED AUTHORIZATION*******

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, books and reading materials from a range of thought are crucial for the educational advancement of students and adults in this modern era; and

WHEREAS, the lack of such reading resources will hinder new growth and thought, negatively impacting our public schools, universities, workforce, and economy; and

WHEREAS, Texas state officials in leadership positions this past October have begun questioning books and reading materials in public schools, particularly those relating to race and sexuality, including Pulitzer Prize winning books and authors; and

WHEREAS, everyone in our community has the right to read whichever book they choose, including books pertaining to race, sexuality, immigration, LGBTQ items, and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the books in jeopardy of being banned tell the stories of people of color and are the stories of the marginally oppressed which should be included in the education of all people; and

WHEREAS, the power of words and books should be used to open the eyes and the world of younger generations; and

WHEREAS, if young people are not encouraged to read the truths of history in school, the El Paso Public Library system can be a resource to their growth and understanding; and

WHEREAS, we have an obligation to make sure all stories are heard. When we talk about inclusivity, we mean that we are one community, that we make sure the voices of all our constituents are represented through diverse storytelling; and

WHEREAS, the over 800 books at risk of being inaccessible to Texas students, by Texas State leadership, include notable titles, such as:

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck

The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas

Middlesex by Jeffrey Eugenides

The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood

And Still I Rise: Black America since MLK: an illustrated chronology by Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

The Indian Removal Act and the Trail of Tears by Susan E. Hamen

Stamped from the Beginning : the Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America by Ibram X. Kendi and Jason Reynolds

WHEREAS, it would serve a municipal purpose to provide the above mentioned book section in order to facilitate the reading interests of El Paso's citizens.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:

That the City Manager, through the El Paso Public Libraries, will collaborate with the YWCA regarding the list of “Banned Books” and to make the books that are in the Library system readily available for the public in El Paso Public Libraries in a permanent section, easily searchable and to make the list available to the public at each library.

APPROVED this ____ day of _____ 2022.

CITY OF EL PASO

Oscar Leeser
Mayor

ATTEST:

Laura D. Prine, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Karla Munoz, Assistant City Attorney