



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### North American Urban Public Libraries Take a Stand for Democracy

*A new publication from the Urban Libraries Council highlights libraries' ongoing efforts to safeguard democracy and urges all library executives to take a stand.*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Today, the Urban Libraries Council (ULC) published a new Leadership Brief — [Libraries as Cornerstones of Democracy](#). This timely publication outlines the vital work public libraries are performing to ensure all community members are informed and active in protecting democracy and intellectual freedom. *Libraries as Cornerstones of Democracy* urges library executives to embody the value of ULC's [Declaration of Democracy](#) by supporting and promoting the preservation of rights and active citizenry.

To guide library executives in taking additional steps to protect and preserve democracy, the Leadership Brief highlights the core areas libraries can focus on to increase their reach in promoting a more democratic community, as outlined in the Declaration of Democracy. The Brief also spotlights the work of eight exemplary ULC member libraries in the U.S. and Canada that empower their patrons through various programs and services.

"It is clear that we are currently living in a time fraught with assaults on freedoms and basic human rights," said ULC President and CEO Brooks Rainwater. "The closely held values of library professionals are being questioned through the rise in book banning and restrictive legislation. It is incumbent on all leaders — of libraries and otherwise — to stand up against these efforts and ensure everyone's fundamental rights are protected."

While protecting democracy and intellectual freedom is essential, conversations around these topics can often be nuanced and intimidating. ULC's supplemental resource [Talking About Democracy and Free Expression in Public Libraries](#) offers answers to frequently asked questions and explanations of commonly used phrases when discussing the library's role as a cornerstone of democracy.

ULC invites all library executives and other organizations committed to free expression to pledge their commitment to preserving, protecting and advancing the ideals of democracy and

intellectual freedom by [signing on](#) to the ULC Declaration of Democracy. With this commitment, signers join a group of public libraries and supporting organizations to guard democracy's great promise and ensure all those served are included in its fulfillment.

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### **About the Urban Libraries Council**

The Urban Libraries Council is an innovation and impact tank of North America's leading public library systems. ULC drives cutting-edge research and strategic partnerships to elevate the power of libraries as essential, transformative institutions. More than 170 urban member libraries in the U.S. and Canada rely on ULC to identify significant challenges facing today's communities and provide new tools and techniques to help libraries achieve stronger outcomes in education, digital equity, workforce and economic development, and race and social equity.