



New Jersey Library Association Statement Following January 6, 2021 Attack on Congress

January 7, 2021

In the aftermath of the insurrection on January 6, 2021 in Washington D.C., the New Jersey Library Association (NJLA) condemns the violent attempt to interfere with the peaceful transition of power that is so vital to our Republic.

As information professionals, we abhor disinformation especially when it is intended to disenfranchise the public. We call on all New Jersey elected officials to adhere to the oath of their office and to cease rhetoric designed to bolster easily disproved allegations that the election was stolen. It was unequivocally not.

We acknowledge with gratitude the quick resumption of work by Congress and its certification of the November 2020 election results. While delayed, yesterday's attack on Congress did not subvert our democracy.

It's also important that we recognize what happened yesterday. We saw the disparities in the law enforcement response to this clear act of sedition, as opposed to the law enforcement response to the largely peaceful protests throughout 2020. We saw the images of police officers taking selfies with terrorists intent on stopping the democratic functions of our Republic. And while we watched, we remembered the tear gas and rubber bullets used to disperse peaceful protestors in our Nation's Capitol in 2020. The New Jersey Library Association recognizes that those disparities are rooted in systemic racism and must be eradicated from our society.

We stand against hate and injustice in all its forms and reaffirm our commitment to do all in our power to fight it. We are appalled by the flagrant displays of racism and antisemitism so pervasive in the signs and clothing of the terrorists.

NJLA recognizes the need for a transparent and honest accounting of what happened, how it was allowed to happen, and why there were so few arrests. We call on Congress to begin such an investigation immediately.

Libraries are, rightly, often called the cornerstones of democracy and freedom of speech. We recognize our unique role in society and embrace the obligation of all libraries to provide residents of New Jersey with the tools needed to combat the dangers of the rampant disinformation infecting our national dialog. Libraries provide trusted, authentic and vetted knowledge to all. We must dismantle the systemic racism and other abuses of power that undermine our attempts to become a more just society. We publicly recommit our Association and our membership to this important work. We recognize that while there are many points of view necessary to engage in the development of public policy, there is no place in that debate for hate, disinformation, lies and terror.

Jen Schureman-Brenner
President, NJLA

Juliet Machie, Ed.D.
Executive Director, NJLA