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Will Manley Statement

“Despite our core value of intellectual freedom, librarians are not very tolerant of listening to points of view that stray from the basic liberal agenda. That is why conservative librarians are afraid to speak out: They fear professional ostracism.”

I think that Will Manley makes an interesting point that can (and should) be viewed from both sides. I, personally, do believe that Manley is correct in his statement that librarians tend to stick toward a liberal agenda, but I disagree with his reasons as to why.

Personally, I think the Manley is correct and that the selection of materials might be impacted. For example, there are obviously views in the liberal agenda that are not equally expressed in the conservative party. This can be said with just about any major disagreement: immigration, gay and lesbian rights, taxes and so on.

Without getting into the main arguments of political beliefs, I think that libraries can be slightly more biased toward a liberal agenda. For example, looking up terms like ‘Gay’ or ‘Lesbian’ or ‘Homosexuality’ in my personal library’s catalog, there are pages and pages of books about gay and lesbian rights, gay and lesbian families and so on. There is not, however, a lot of material against the liberal view of equal rights for homosexual pairings.

Another example is gun control. Again, there is more material present for gun control than against it. There are a few books on the rights to bear arms and more about the regulation of firearms safely.

The distribution of materials relating to the liberal vs. conservative agendas is clearly favored in the direction of the liberal party. The liberal agenda is a factor when

looking at materials for collection management. Even browsing a collection such as the Austin Public Library of Austin, Texas (typically a conservative state) the results are very similar to the materials available on the Connecticut shoreline materials. Even on the subject of gun control (something that one would expect closely guarded), the results were similar.

As for the second part of his quote ('fear of professional ostracism'), I don't think that Manley is correct. I think that, perhaps, the reason that the liberal agenda seems to be more prevalent is because there is simply more substantial material made to favor the liberal side. Most conservative arguments can be found in online articles or web pages (without citing biased media groups). But using the same example of 'gun control' to search a massive group like Amazon, there are a surprisingly limited number of materials that present many pro-gun arguments. Most pro-gun arguments can be summarized in an article or webpage, without the need for a full book to be written.