



April 17, 2025

Dear

This letter is in response to the completed Request for Reconsideration form for “Plenty of Hugs” by Fran Manushkin in the Cromaine District Library (CDL) collection. The concern about this title noted on the form was “sexualization/exploitation of children.”

When we met you explained to me that your main goal is to protect children from the subject matter of these particular books, which you broadly defined as containing viewpoints that, in your opinion, “will lead children to confusion about gender.” I explained to you that per library policy, only a parent may restrict what their own children read, and that public bodies may not restrict access to books based on the book’s viewpoint. You indicated that your personal views about gender confusion should take precedence over the rights of other parents in the community with whom you disagree.

After completing a staff review, I have concluded that this title was acquired in accordance with the library’s Materials Selection Policy #3010, which was provided when we discussed your concern in March 2025. This title was first available to community members in June 2020 and has circulated 9 times. It is published by Dial Books for Young Readers. It is shelved in the youth picture book section because it is a picture book written for children ages 1-5.

Kirkus Reviews (kirkusreviews.com), a professional review source used by librarians when selecting titles, reviewed the title on January 20, 2020. They awarded it a starred review, indicating the reviewer felt the title was an outstanding example for the genre. The review reads:

A sweet portrait of parental love, notable for its depiction of a two-mom family.

The text neither names nor defines the family relationships in this picture book, so Alizadeh’s art takes the lead in depicting two women and their baby. One mother appears white, with light skin and short-cropped brown hair, while the other has long, dark, wavy hair and a slightly darker skin tone. Their child has coloring more like that of the latter mother and is clearly abundantly loved by both parents. The illustrations depict the family riding their bicycles to a farm and a zoo before heading home for dinner, a bath, and bedtime. The loose linework, gentle palette, and soft visual texture of the art is a perfect match for the lilting, easy cadence of the affirming text: “There’s a buzz for each bug, / and a breeze for each tree, / and plenty of hugs for you and me.” The speaker and addressee of this line and others are never defined, which underscores the clarity of Alizadeh’s intention in depicting this particular queer family constellation. “You” could have been depicted as one person, after all, but this line is accompanied by a group hug shared by the child and two moms. Plenty of need for this warm hug of a book. (Picture book. 1-5)

CDL’s Policy #3010, Section V part B. notes that “Responsibility for the reading material of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection shall not be inhibited solely by the possibility that books may inadvertently come into the possession of children. The Library respects each individual parent’s right to supervise his/her children’s choice of reading materials. However, the Library does not have the right to act in loco parentis (in place of the parent). Therefore, a parent who chooses to restrict the materials his/her children select must accompany those children when they use the collection to

impose those restrictions. Juvenile material may be labeled with non-prejudicial, viewpoint-neutral labels.

Review has deemed that a genre label of “social issues” is appropriate, and therefore has been applied to “Plenty of Hugs.”

C. The Library Director is responsible for overseeing where the books are shelved and catalogued. However, the Library Board recommends that any materials that are appropriate for adults or older teens but may be considered harmful to minors, as defined by the Library Privacy Act, are shelved within the adult collection.

Review has deemed this content does not fit the definition of “harmful to minors” in [MCL722.674 sec.4](#). Therefore, “Plenty of Hugs” will be retained in the youth picture book section of the library.

Policy #3010 provides a protocol to appeal of this decision in Section IX Part F: written appeal of the Library Director’s decision may be made by the Requester to the Chair of the Library Board within ten (10) business days after the written decision is made by the Library Director. The appeal must include the specific Library Material being appealed and the reason that the Requester would like the decision reversed. Please direct an appeal to:

William Bolin
President, Cromaine District Library Board of Trustees
PO Box 308
3688 N. Hartland Rd.
Hartland, MI 48353

The Library Board will review any documentation it deems necessary to decide within sixty (60) days of receipt of the appeal. The Library Board may issue an additional extension if necessary in order to fully evaluate the material.

CDL’s Board of Trustees delegates collection development responsibilities to the library director. A staff of librarians with advanced degrees and professional credentials make collection development decisions for CDL. Ultimately, however, the responsibility of what a child reads rests with parents and guardians. Public libraries cannot be expected to interfere with parental obligations and responsibilities when it comes to deciding what a minor may read, listen to, or view. It is the right of parent/guardian to determine what materials are available for their children to read.

The Cromaine District Library serves 30,000 people in Hartland Township and portions of Brighton, Deerfield, Genoa, Oceola and Tyrone Townships. Library patrons come from a wide variety of religious, political, ethnic, and social backgrounds. Members of our community are well educated and possess a broad range of interests. Not every item the library offers will be enjoyed by every reader, listener, or viewer, but there is something for everyone at the public library. I respect your personal taste in materials and encourage you to ask CDL librarians to recommend titles that more closely match your interests.

Best,

Sarah Neidert
Director, Cromaine District Library