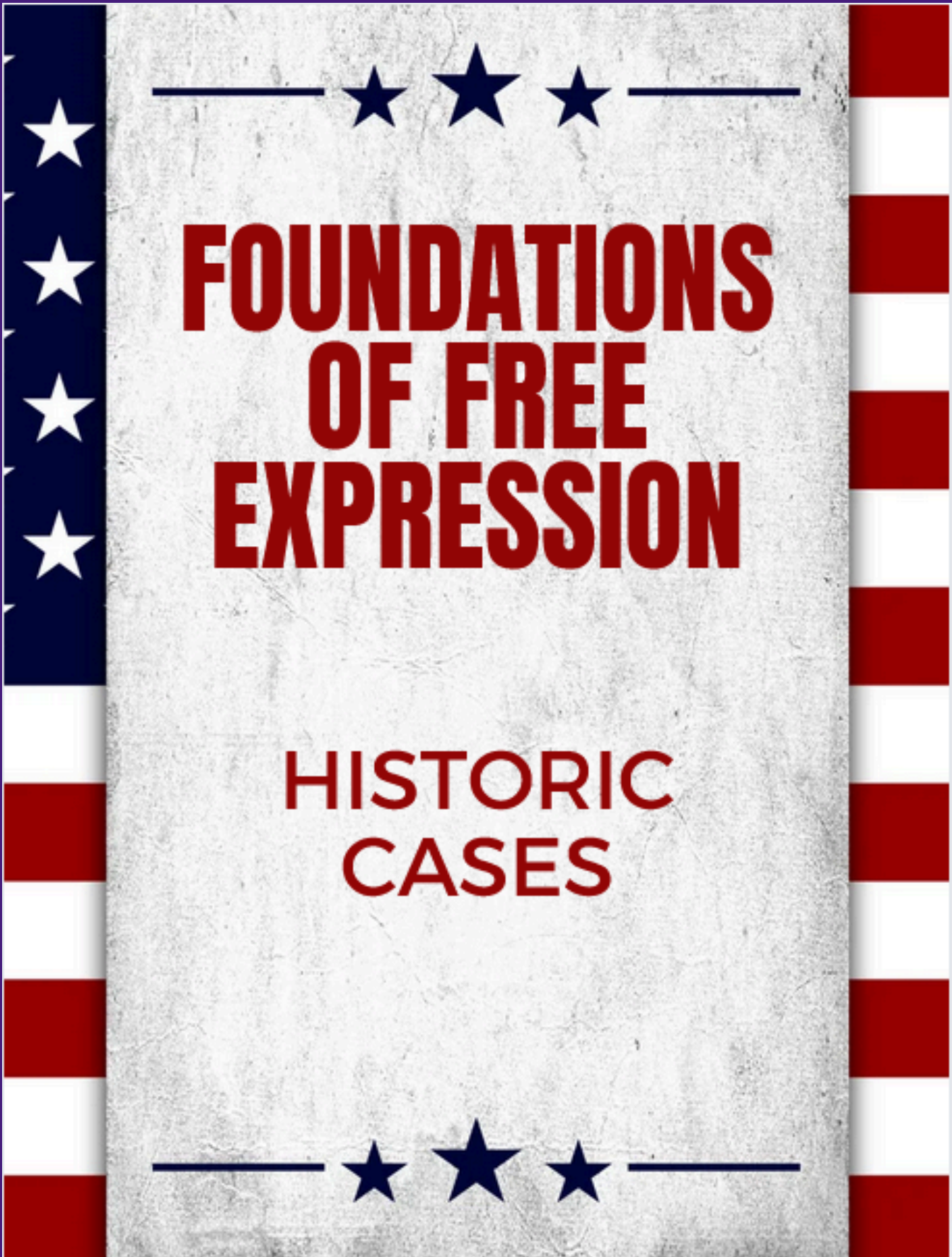


ACCESS, INQUIRY, DIALOGUE: REIMAGINING GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS IN EXHIBITS

AUTHOR

Abigail McCoy
Director of Access & Discovery
Louisiana State University Shreveport

By showcasing how government documents can illuminate complex social issues, this poster encourages librarians and educators to rethink their use of these underutilized resources by delving into the planning and execution of two exhibits at LSUS, “Freedom to Read: Banned Books and Constitutional Rights” and “Read with Pride!”



INTRODUCTION

In the last five years librarians at Noel Memorial Library have started to create exhibits not just displays at our library. We define an exhibit as a selection of items (either physical or virtual) paired with accompanying textual, visual, or auditory content which serves as a form of communication between the library and its patrons. **Exhibits should have associated learning outcomes and require considerable research.**

PURPOSE OF EXHIBITS

- Represent Collections Across all formats
- Foster Inclusion and Showcase Campus Scholarship
- Highlight Diverse Viewpoints and Cultural Relevance
- Visually compelling, thematically coherent, and thoughtfully arranged to engage a wide audience.
- Encourage Critical Thinking Through Transparency
 - Clearly identify Sources and viewpoints

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS IN EXHIBITS

- Government documents are incorporated into exhibits whenever possible to broaden the scope and visibility of our collections. During the planning and research phase, I intentionally seek materials from multiple library collections to create a more layered and inclusive narrative. These documents serve as valuable entry points for discussion, helping to illuminate diverse perspectives and spark deeper engagement with the topic.
- As primary sources, government documents offer students a direct lens into the historical and policy dimensions of an issue—grounding contemporary conversations in rich, contextual understanding.

EXHIBIT DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

- Curated through librarian research and collection resources
- Cited Resources
 - Websites and online materials are included in citations to provide additional context and support further exploration.
- Visual & Interactive Elements
 - Interactive elements such as trivia flip cards to enhance engagement
 - Timeline of LGBTQ History in Government Documents (Smith, 2025)
 - 3-D printed items related to the theme
- Narrative-Driven Layout
- Digital Enhancements
 - QR codes to connect physical materials with digital resources. Such as QR codes linked directly to court cases available in our library databases, offering seamless access to primary sources.
 - Virtual LibGuides created to provide access to distance students.

THEMES OF PAST EXHIBITS

- Freedom to Read: Banned Books and Constitutional Rights
- Read with Pride
 - View the LGBTQ+ movement through our government’s policies and public records.

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENT TITLES USED:

- Public Papers of the Presidents (AE 2.114:)
- United States Reports
- Statutes at Large (AE 2.111:)
- The End of Don’t Ask Don’t Tell: The impact in Studies and Personal Essays by Service Members and Veterans (D 214.2:D 71)
- Hate Crimes on Campus: the Problem and Efforts to Confront It (J 26.30:H 28/4)
- A Provider’s Introduction to Substance Abuse Treatment for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Individuals (HE 20.402:SU 1/4)



REFERENCES

American Library Association. (2017, May). Notable first amendment court cases. American Library Association. <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/censorship/courtcases>

Smith, K. L. (2025, June 1). LGBTQ history in government documents: Timeline of documents. <https://ucsd.libguides.com/lgbtdocs/timeline>