



2090 Kittridge St.
Berkeley, CA 94704

Re: Fresh Start Resolution 4b.29

March 18, 2017

Dear Mayor Arreguín and City Councilmembers,

The Berkeley Public Library Foundation exists to help make Berkeley's great Library extraordinary through advocacy and fundraising for capital and special projects. Over the past twenty years, the Foundation has contributed more than \$8 million to support this beloved civic institution.

We are keenly aware of the challenges that face the Library, including the internal conflicts that have occupied the Board of Library Trustees (BOLT) and the Berkeley Public Library staff for the last two years. We share our community's concern that the Library is hampered in its mission to serve the public good until these conflicts are resolved in a fair and well-considered manner.

Long ago our city's elected leaders made a wise decision to distance the Library's governance and operation from political influence. Processes and practices were established so that the Library — its collection and services, the selection of its Library Director, the review and recommendation of the volunteers who serve on BOLT, and the day-to-day management of the Library — is protected from undue influence by special interests or politics.

In the last six months, dynamic new leaders have joined those who serve the people of Berkeley, including our new Mayor, Councilmembers, Library Director, and Deputy Library Director. We know our city government, BOLT, and the Library staff are committed to the health and well-being of the Berkeley Public Library. However, the Foundation is deeply concerned about the growing politicization of this important and independent institution. The attempts to remove and replace Library Trustees midterm risk further destabilizing the Library. We fear this would have a negative impact on the Library's reputation and on the future of both public funding and the Foundation's efforts to raise private support from Berkeley's residents.

We ask you, Mayor Arreguín, and all our city's elected leaders to honor the processes in place that govern the Library and to use your unique positions and considerable authority to meet with and find constructive ways to work together with BOLT and the newly hired Library Directors. We urge you to be models of the collaboration and forward movement that our great city needs.

Sincerely,

Rachel Anderson, President on behalf of the Board of Directors
cc: City Clerk

Karen Bird
Trish Hawthorne
Anne Marxer

Robin Claire
Irene Hegarty
Mary O'Neill

Fredrica Drotos
Karen Holtermann
Nancy Park

Linda Schacht Gage
Barbara Manierre
Mindy Rex