**Meridian Library Patron’s Petition for Dissolution**

By: Jasmine Wilkins

A group by the name of “concerned citizens of Meridian,” filed a petition to eliminate the Meridian Library District for, among other offenses, allegedly carrying books that are offensive. They complain that the library district has continuously allowed literature that sexualizes minors. Reported by [KTVB](https://www.ktvb.com/article/news/local/local-public-hearing-for-the-petition-to-dissolve-the-meridian-library-district-scheduled-for-march/277-1089569c-1567-4495-a4bd-04666e895fc3), the petition also states that the Meridian Library District, “... continues to provide facilities for the sexual indoctrination of minors by the Queer Straight Alliance."

The Meridian Library District’s Board of Trustee reported that hundreds of thousands of patrons visit the library every year. Board of trustee chair, Megan Larsen, commented that it is unfortunate that a small group of people are “willing to dissolve the library, shut it down completely, rather than let families make their own choices about what they want to read, as they've done for nearly 100 years in Meridian.” There are 45,000 cardholders in the district. A levy in 2019 was passed in Idaho, where the district has planned to open 3 more library [branches](https://www.mld.org/locations/unbound) in response to patron’s feedback.

In the [petition](https://adacounty.id.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Petition-for-Dissolution-of-Meridian-Library-Dist.pdf), the signed citizens stated that the Library Board of Trustees has failed to discuss ‘any policy change regarding minors' access to obscene and sexually explicit materials.’ The petitioners went as far as to suggest the commissioners of Ada County appoint an interim Board of Trustees to reorganize the library entity and to decrease the terms of the members of the Board. They want board member’s terms reduced to three years from six. The petitioners reiterate the Board’s refusal to allow any discourse on their stance of the matter. In August 2022, the Board heard two hours of public testimonies. They feel this violates their rights as taxpayers, claiming it “amounts to taxation without representation.”

They would also like the library entity to “segregate explicit materials.” The Library District feels that this is an extension of the banned books saga, where in March 2022, Bills against books were passed through legislature but were not turned into laws. The [Idaho Press](https://www.idahopress.com/news/local/super-secret-folder-house-passed-around-in-regards-to-hb-666-is-revealed/article_8ee69c53-1ab8-5619-8953-e14cb64beb81.html) found that the books that were brought to the attention of Lawmakers were cataloged in the teen and adult fiction sections of the library. Nick Grove, Meridian Library Director, spoke against the group in November 2022 stating, “You have the right to object to an item. You have the right to recommend a reconsideration of an item that you don’t like,” Grove said, “You do not have the right to ban books or segregate access to books that you do not want.”

A [rally](https://www.ktvb.com/article/news/local/local-meridian-library-support-rally/277-76871def-5fc2-4d2b-8ded-e4d5b620d56a) was organized against the petition by 19-year old Izzy Burgess. Izzy Burgess used to work for the Meridian Library District. Another BSU student also spoke against those who had a problem with the libraries. Naomi Trueman proclaimed that, “parents should be more concerned with their children’s internet access themselves, something they have control of, than blaming libraries and librarians “for the information they have available.”

If this petition is successful the Library District can be dissolved. The petition needed 50 signatures to be presented to the Ada County Commission. The clerk delivered the petition to the commission on livestream. Now a public hearing has to be held. If the dissolution is approved the Board has to dispose of the District’s property. There will be a hearing on March 20, 2023 at 6:00 to address the petition. As a result it will be determined if the library dissolution will be put on the Voter’s Ballot or not.