



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Celebrating the Freedom to Read, October 1 Banned Books Readout!

**Hartford, Connecticut (September 24, 2012)** To celebrate our freedom to read, Hartford Public Library, American Civil Liberties Union, and the Law and Government Academy at Hartford Public High School will present a **Banned Books Readout** on Monday, October 1st at 6:00 p.m. at Hartford Public Library's Mark Twain Branch, located in Hartford Public High School at 55 Forest Street. Light refreshments will be available at 5:30 p.m. John Dankosky, WNPR News Director and Host of *Where We Live*, will moderate the program.



"Banned Books Week is designed to draw attention to the fact that, despite the First Amendment's sweeping protection of free speech and expression, misguided fears of ideas have led to censorship throughout our country's history," said Andrew Schneider Executive Director of the ACLU-CT.

Some of the most popular books in the United States, including titles such as Maurice Sendak's children's book *In The Night Kitchen*, have been challenged or banned from schools and libraries. Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* was censored for years to make it more acceptable for use in schools. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky has been compared to *Catcher in the Rye*. Both books have been removed from schools and libraries due to their content and subject matter.

To draw attention to banned books and in celebration of the freedom to read, *Banned Books Week* has been observed since 1982. This year it is being celebrated September 30 – October 6.

Matthew K. Poland, chief executive officer of the Hartford Public Library said, "The Library is delighted to be collaborating with the ACLU and the Law and Government Academy to celebrate the freedom to read, one of the hallmarks of a free and open society. This has never been more important than it is today in light of current world and national events."

The October 1 event will feature prominent members of the community reading passages from their favorite banned books. Readers will include Dr. Christina Kishimoto, Superintendent, Hartford Public Schools, Secretary of the State Denise Merrill, Hartford City Councilwoman Cynthia R. Jennings, Luis Caban, recently retired Executive Director, Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance, Deacon

Arthur Miller, Director, Office of Black Catholic Ministries for the Archdiocese of Hartford, and Tiffany Mitchell, Senior at Law and Government Academy, Hartford Public High School.

Adam Johnson, Principal of Law and Government Academy said, "It's very important in today's environment to expose our students to the issues of censorship and the freedom to read. Being directly involved with the October 1 program is a great opportunity for our young people."

**About [Hartford Public Library](#)**

Hartford Public Library traces its roots to 1774. It operates 10 locations in the City of Hartford. The Library receives more than 860,000 visits per year. Services include access to a large collection of materials for reading and research, as well as music and video. Programs provide education, information and enrichment to the people of Hartford in such areas as citizenship training, literacy, business skills and cultural awareness. The mission of Hartford Public Library is to provide free resources that inspire reading, guide learning, and encourage individual exploration. Visit [hplct.org](http://hplct.org) and the library's new blog at [blogs.hplct.org](http://blogs.hplct.org)

**About American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut:**

The American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT) is a nonpartisan, non-profit membership organization whose mission is to assure that the Bill of Rights and the rights guaranteed by the Connecticut Constitution are preserved for each new generation. The ACLU-CT accomplishes these goals through legislative advocacy, litigation, grassroots organizing and public education on a broad array of issues affecting our liberties. The ACLU-CT is one of 53 affiliates of the American Civil Liberties Union nationwide.