

City of Mary Esther
RESOLUTION 2005-02

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MARY ESTHER,
FLORIDA STATING OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSED
FLORIDA LEGISLATIVE BILLS SB 1522 AND HB 611
RELATING TO MANDATED INTERNET FILTERING AND
PENALTIES; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE
DATE.**

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Mary Esther believes that the protection of our children while visiting and using our libraries is of the highest priority; and

WHEREAS, public librarians throughout Okaloosa County work diligently with and within their communities to provide a safe, inviting and educational place for area children; and

WHEREAS, the City of Mary Esther strongly believes in the First Amendment allowing for the free and open access to information that people of all ages need and want regardless of the format of that information; and

WHEREAS, many City residents rely solely on library-provided public access computers to meet their information needs, including Internet access, because they cannot afford computers or the training necessary to operate them successfully; and

WHEREAS, cooperative libraries consistently partner with parents and work unceasingly toward helping adults and children in their communities become information literate by teaching them how to access, evaluate, and use information; and

WHEREAS, the City of Mary Esther is dedicated to educating children to use the Internet wisely and responsibly in the belief that knowledge provides the best protection now and in the future; and

WHEREAS, cooperative member libraries implement specific Internet use policies based on the needs of their communities; and

WHEREAS, Mary Esther Public Library and the City of Mary Esther does not endorse State-mandated blocking or filtering Internet content in libraries because there is currently no proven technology that can successfully block out all offensive content while allowing access to all constitutionally protected material; and

WHEREAS, HB 0611 and CS/SB 1522 are unfunded mandates and, if implemented, would do significant harm to all Cooperative libraries by further eroding already fiscally impacted budgets and curtailing valuable programs, services and purchase of educational materials; and

WHEREAS, the penalties proscribed in the aforementioned legislation are viewed as harsh and overly severe in nature and are not assigned to any other educational agency; and

WHEREAS, Internet use policies in Okaloosa County public libraries, including the Mary Esther Public Library, have heretofore been created and decided upon at the local government level.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MARY ESTHER, FLORIDA, THAT:

SECTION I.

1. Okaloosa County Public Library Cooperative will continue to work with local communities and governing agencies to ensure that all area children are protected in member libraries; and
2. The City of Mary Esther will diligently work to overturn any law that usurps or undermines local control of library policy and procedure; and
3. The City of Mary Esther will support the Florida Library Association's work with the Federal Communications Commission, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the U.S. Department of Education, to ensure that the values of fair and open access for all are considered as they administer these grants and discounts; and
4. Okaloosa County will continue to support and encourage all six Cooperative member libraries as they educate children and adults in the safe and effective use of the Internet; and
5. The City of Mary Esther will support efforts directed against this type of Act to ensure that the people residing in Mary Esther will have unfettered access to all forms of information resources; and
6. The City of Mary Esther will submit this resolution to Florida Governor Jeb Bush, the Speaker of the House and the Senate President of the Florida Legislature.

SECTION II.

This Resolution becomes effective upon approval and adoption by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Mary Esther.

ADOPTED IN SESSION THIS _____ DAY OF April 2005.

John Thomas
Mayor

ATTEST:

Laura Aldrich, CMC
City Clerk