

From: Brown, Sonja
To: ABO PRIVACY
Subject: FW: Choice Books
Date: Wednesday, May 11, 2022 2:18:38 PM

Sonja Brown
Associate Director
New Mexico VAHCS
505-265-1711, ext. 2076

From: Smith, Christopher T. (B6)
Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2022 2:38 PM
To: Whitmer, Michael (B6); Brown, Sonja (B6); Kirkland, Isabel (B6); Crabtree, James N (B6)
Subject: RE: Choice Books

Mike,

To be clear, you are not to pull bibles. Choice books should merchandise books on the spinner as they always have. The Easter display was problematic as it "promotes" one religion over others. Books in a rack does not. That is the law per the directive I sent CC's.

Chris

From: Whitmer, Michael (B6)
Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2022 1:28 PM
To: Brown, Sonja (B6); Smith, Christopher T. (B6); Kirkland, Isabel (B6); Crabtree, James N (B6)
Subject: RE: Choice Books

All our books are correct per VCSCO and Medical Center . All our books are on the book rack only – FYI I won't be replying to any Medical Staff emails .

From: Spencer, Margaret (B6)
Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2022 2:19 PM
To: Probst, Laura (B6); Whitmer, Michael (B6); Crabtree, James N (B6); Brown, Sonja (B6); Kirkland, Isabel (B6)
Cc: Kando, Janice (B6); Link, John G. (B6)
Subject: RE: Choice Books

Mr Whitmer et al,

Thanks so much for your attention to the presence of Christian religious books in our VA Patriot Store. I was heartened to read of the intent to remove them last month in the email string below.

Today I was in the Patriot store again and went to the book rack to check it out. I'm sorry to say I counted 32 clearly Christian books on the rack! Thirty two! The few others there are secular.

As I had stated in an earlier email about the Easter Christian book display (which was removed from the Patriot Store: thank you!), I have deep respect for all religions and gratitude for our country where freedom of religion is ensured by the constitution. But for any one religion to be apparently promoted in a VA setting is legally and ethically out of line.

I hope this can be corrected. Thank you very much for your understanding, your time, and your efforts. I am honored to work here, and to serve ALL veterans regardless of religious affiliation.

Best,

Margaret "Peggy" Spencer, MD
Primary Care Physician
Mindfulness Instructor
NM Veterans Administration

From: Probst, Laura [REDACTED] (B6)
Sent: Wednesday, March 23, 2022 9:42 AM
To: Spencer, Margaret [REDACTED] (B6)
Cc: Kando, Janice [REDACTED] (B6); Link, John G. [REDACTED] (B6)
Subject: FW: Choice Books

Please see below, thank you!

From: Brown, Sonja [REDACTED] (B6)
Sent: Tuesday, March 22, 2022 4:39 PM
To: Probst, Laura [REDACTED] (B6)
Subject: Fwd: Choice Books

Hi, sharing this and will forward another email.

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From: Whitmer, Michael [REDACTED] (B6)
Sent: Tuesday, March 22, 2022 4:03 PM
To: Crabtree, James N [REDACTED] (B6); Brown, Sonja [REDACTED] (B6); Kirkland,

Isabel [REDACTED] (B6)

Subject: Choice Books

Mr. Crabtree we are going to pull any overly religious themed books moving forward per Chris Smith (RM) . I am looking at the book rack display also now . We have pulled all Bible's --FYI

Thanks for the heads up and support