Library Law of the PRC

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Chapter I — General Provisions

Article 1 — This Law is enacted for the purposes of promoting the development of the public library undertaking, giving full play to the functions of public libraries, safeguarding the basic cultural rights and interests of citizens, improving the scientific and cultural quality of citizens and the degree of social civilization, passing on human civilization, and strengthening cultural confidence.

Article 2 — For the purposes of this Law, the term "public libraries" refers to public cultural facilities that are open to the public free of charge and that collect, organize, and preserve documentary information, provide inquiry and lending services, and carry out social education. The provisions of this Law shall apply to public libraries.

Article 3 — Public libraries are an important component of the socialist public cultural service system. The development of public libraries shall adhere to the orientation of advanced socialist culture, follow the people-centered approach, be driven by core socialist values, and inherit and develop the fine traditional

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Chinese culture.

Article 4 — The people's governments at or above the county level shall incorporate the development of public libraries into their national economic and social development plans at the corresponding level, include the funds required for the construction of public libraries in the fiscal budgets at the corresponding level, and increase investment in the development of public libraries.

Article 5 — The cultural administrative department under the State Council shall be responsible for the administration of the nationwide public library undertaking. The cultural administrative departments under the local people's governments at or above the county level shall be responsible for the administration of the public library undertaking within their respective administrative areas.

Article 6 — The State shall encourage and support citizens, legal persons, and other organizations in establishing public libraries or in donating to public libraries, and shall provide tax incentives and other preferential treatment in accordance with the relevant provisions of the State.

Article 7 — The State shall support scientific research and technological development in the field of public libraries, promote the application of modern information technology and communication technology in public libraries, and advance the construction of digital and smart libraries.

Chapter II — Establishment of Public Libraries

Article 8 — The State shall establish a service network of public libraries covering both urban and rural areas, which is convenient and accessible, practical, and efficient. Public libraries shall adhere to the principles of government leadership and social participation.

Article 9 — Local people's governments shall, in accordance with the population size, population distribution, and economic and social development level of their respective administrative areas, determine the quantity, scale, structure, and layout of public libraries.

Article 10 — Public libraries shall meet the following conditions: (1) having a charter; (2) having a fixed venue; (3) having a collection of documentary information and corresponding facilities and equipment suitable for their functions; (4) having a name and organizational structure commensurate with their scale; (5) having qualified staff members; and (6) other conditions prescribed by the State.

Article 11 — The establishment, alteration, and termination of public libraries established by the government shall be subject to the approval of the cultural administrative department at the corresponding level in accordance with the relevant provisions. Public libraries established by citizens, legal persons, or other organizations shall undergo registration formalities in accordance with the relevant provisions of the State and shall report to the local cultural administrative department for record-filing.

Article 12 — Public libraries shall have an appropriate name. The naming of public libraries shall comply with the provisions of laws and regulations on name registration administration and shall not damage the public interest or the lawful rights and interests of others.

Chapter III — Operation of Public Libraries

Article 13 — Public libraries shall establish and improve their internal management systems and operational mechanisms, enhance service quality and efficiency, and accept social supervision.

Article 14 — Public libraries shall, in accordance with their functions and the needs of their readers, collect documentary information in a planned manner. They shall properly collect documentary information such as local documents, government publications, and the Chinese nation's cultural heritage.

Article 15 — Public libraries shall handle the classification, cataloging, arrangement, and preservation of documentary information in accordance with the relevant national provisions and standards and shall

establish a documentary information security mechanism.

Article 16 — Public libraries shall properly protect readers' personal information and borrowing records, and shall not disclose them to any organization or individual without authorization.

Article 17 — Public libraries may, through means such as purchasing services and commissioning operations, absorb social forces in participating in the operation and management of public libraries.

Chapter IV — Services of Public Libraries

Article 18 — Public libraries shall open to the public free of charge and provide the following services: (1) inquiry and lending of documentary information; (2) use of reading rooms and study rooms; (3) provision of public information and reference and consultation services; (4) reading promotion, reading guidance, and social education; (5) interlibrary loan, general loan and return, and mobile services; and (6) other services prescribed by the State.

Article 19 — Public libraries shall publicize their service content, opening hours, borrowing rules, and service commitments. Public libraries shall not close their doors during public holidays or statutory holidays without justification.

Article 20 — Public libraries established by the government shall provide special services for key groups such as minors, the elderly, and persons with disabilities, and shall set up reading areas for minors and equip barrier-free facilities and devices.

Article 21 — Public libraries shall strengthen interlibrary collaboration and sharing, promote the co-construction and sharing of documentary information resources, and carry out various forms of service cooperation and exchanges.

Article 22 — Public libraries shall strengthen the construction of digital resources, equip corresponding facilities and equipment, establish an integrated online and offline document information sharing platform, and provide digital services to the public.

Article 23 — Public libraries shall collect and protect readers' opinions and suggestions, improve service quality, and enhance readers' satisfaction.

Chapter V — Legal Liability

Article 24 — Where a public library commits any of the following acts, the cultural administrative department shall order it to make rectification; where the circumstances are serious, the directly responsible person in charge and other directly responsible persons shall be given sanctions in accordance with the law: (1) failing to open to the public free of charge as required; (2) closing without justification; (3) failing to publicize service content, opening hours, or other matters as required; (4) failing to establish a documentary information security mechanism; (5) failing to properly protect readers' personal information; or (6) failing to provide services in accordance with the provisions of this Law.

Article 25 — Anyone who damages public library facilities or documentary information shall bear civil liability in accordance with the law; if the act constitutes a violation of public security administration, a public security administration penalty shall be imposed in accordance with the law; if the act constitutes a crime, criminal liability shall be pursued in accordance with the law.

Article 26 — Where a functionary of a department responsible for the administration of public libraries or any other relevant department abuses power, neglects duties, or engages in malpractice for personal gain, the functionary shall be given a sanction in accordance with the law; if the act constitutes a crime, criminal liability shall be pursued in accordance with the law.

Chapter VI — Supplementary Provisions

Article 27 — The State Council may formulate implementing regulations for public libraries in accordance with this Law.

Article 28 — This Law shall come into effect as of January 1, 2018.

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