

**Neutrality Is Not An Option:
Book Bans, “Culture Wars,”
and the Library in 2023**

By Kelly Jensen, December 2023

Hello!

I'm Kelly Jensen

Editor @ Book Riot, Author of 3 YA
Anthologies, Former Public Librarian

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What We'll Cover

- Who are the book banners and why do they insist they don't ban books?
- Future targets of book banning & censorship
- Book bans, trauma, & nurturing an environment responsive to employee mental health

“The fact is we’re not banning books, we’re not burning the classics,”

Opinion: We’re not banning books; just making sure they’re age-appropriate

"We're not banning books, we're just removing them from the library,"

‘This is not a book ban’

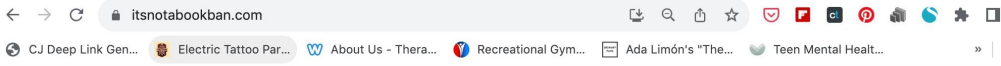
“First of all, I’d like to say, we’re not banning books,” said Light. “Stop saying we’re banning books.”

We’re not banning any books.

1.

Who Are The Book Banners?

And Why Do They Insist They Don't Ban Books?



Are You Being Told This Is An Attack on 'To Kill A Mockingbird'?

Are You Hearing Others Being Called "Book Banners"?

You Should Be Upset...

What Kind Of Books Are We Really Addressing?

Be advised that there may be explicit material in our book reports that is inappropriate for children. It is only included for completeness so that parents seeking to inform themselves may do so with all the available information needed to make informed decisions.

This is not an exhaustive list by any means, but we hope it gives a clearer picture of what we are addressing in Iowa...
and it's not 'To Kill A Mockingbird'

FUN HOME

HAUNTED

PUSH

GENDER QUEER



**Moms For
Liberty**

- “Biggest” players in the game—in terms of media attention
- 300 chapters, 47 states, 130,000+ members
- Ties to Ron DeSantis, Heritage Fund, Leadership Institute, Proud Boys, Three Percenters
- Founded by failed school board candidates in Florida

BookLook/BookLooks

“Review” database used to distribute biased information about “inappropriate” books.

“UBC” Ratings

Counting curse words, “sexual” scenes, religious beliefs

Creators Deny It’s Theirs

Except when they don’t...

Plan of Action - Complete

Our group was originally formed as a Moms For Liberty Library Book Committee. We were very concerned in what is going on in our school libraries and decided to challenge books that were inappropriate. First, we are going after porn in the school libraries, but the book report is designed to document any controversial/inappropriate material for future use or as a parental resource.

In order to challenge the books, we have decided to make our case airtight by taking opinion out of the conversation and attack the problem of inappropriate books by using book citations and presenting it to the school board. Since there are existing laws about pornography and minors, we ask the school board to look through the lens of the law to determine if these books should be accessible to minors in school. When a book is challenged, you can assume that there will be someone responsible to read the material to decide if the book is indeed inappropriate. If that person or committee is like most people, you will try and get the job done the quickest way possible which might mean doing a search of book reviews to determine how bad a book is. This is the method which was used to decide to include the books in the library in the first place in our county. By clearly providing the citations that can be easily fact checked, we take all the leg work out of investigating a challenged book. You can't "not see" the scope of what is inappropriate in the book if all that we present is the facts of the citation.



Penelope Maikisch

Hi there...this is a rating system I created, which have adopted for our organization. It is based on the MPAA/CARA rating system as you have above. It's also based on legal statutes. I live in Florida...but it should still be very applicable across the board. I think a push toward doing away with the labels for "Juvenile", "young adult", and "adult" is in order seeing how many of the books in the "young adult" section and some in the "juvenile" section, contain adult content. Publishers do not take content into account. They only look at word count, vocabulary level, and age of the main character. There are also no regulations placed on publishers. Each one has their own criteria for age groups.

Like Reply Share 46w



2

Are you affiliated with Moms for Liberty or any other groups?

No. We are not affiliated with any other groups. We do not take direction from any other groups. We do not answer to any other groups. However, we do communicate with other individuals and groups with whom there is an intersection of mission and values. We are focused on gathering and making information available to anyone who can make use of it, including individual parents or the groups representing their interests. We commonly allow these entities to use our work and accept suggestions for books to look at.

How do you determine what books to review? It seems unlikely that some of these books would show up in school libraries.

Every book currently reviewed has been located in a school library. Many have been located in our local Brevard County, FL schools, but others have been located across the country by other concerned parents and groups. For many books on our list, that should raise some serious questions. This has been a motivating factor in why we do what we do. Parents need to know what's in the content their children consume and hold schools accountable when they make inappropriate content available to their children.



So, Not The Miller Test?

Do you perform the full "Miller Test" for obscenity for each work?

We are not determining if a work, as a whole, is obscene, per the legal definition. Our rating system gives a recommendation for the level of parental guidance or action based on the work as a whole. Suffice it to say, most works we rate as "No Minors" (4) or "Aberrant Content" (5) would likely be considered obscene by most standards, but that is not what we are determining.

Some astute critics have opined on the fact our definition for "obscene" mirrors the definition from the Miller test but leaves out the wording "taken as a whole." This is because we are only applying the word "obscene" to instances contained within the work (evaluated in context), not the work as a whole. Again, our rating system is not evaluating obscenity (in the legal sense) for the overall work. This should not be misunderstood to construe that we do not evaluate the work as a whole when we assign a rating- we most assuredly do.

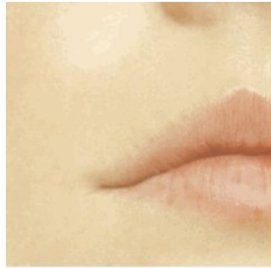
TLDR: We do everything one would do to perform a Miller test, evaluating all "obscene" instances in context and taking the work as a whole. We **don't** make a determination of the legal "obscenity" status of the work as a whole because lawyers are expensive. We **do** make a determination of where the work as a whole (with everything evaluated in context) lands in our rating scale. We also offer our opinion that anything with a 4 or 5 on our scale would likely be determined to be "obscene" in the eyes of the law.

Right, then...

Rating ↓	Title	Author ↑↓
5	Lucky	Alice Sebold
5	Push	Sapphire
5	Sold	Patricia McCormick
5	TRIANGLES	Ellen Hopkins
5	Tricks	Ellen Hopkins
5	YOU: A NOVEL	Caroline Kepnes
4	SEX PLUS: LEARNING, LOVING, AND ENJOYING YOUR BODY	Laci Green
4	SEX IS A FUNNY WORD	Cory Silverberg and Fiona Smyth
4	BREATHLESS	Jennifer Niven
4	A COURT OF MIST AND FURY	Sarah J. Maas
4	A Court of Silver Flames	Sarah J. Maas
4	BREATHLESS	Jennifer Niven
4	Crank	Ellen Hopkins
4	Damsel	Elana Arnold
4	Forever...	Judy Bloom
4	INFANDOUS	Elana K. Arnold
4	LAST NIGHT AT THE TELEGRAPH CLUB	Malinda Lo
4	Red Hood	Elana Arnold
4	The Haters	Jesse Andrews
4	THE INFINITE MOMENT OF US	Lauren Myracle
4	THE NOWHERE GIRLS	Amy Reed
4	This Book Is Gay	Juno Dawson
4	Tilt	Ellen Hopkins

4	WHAT GIRLS ARE MADE OF	Elena K. Arnold
4	A Court of Thorns and Roses	Sarah J. Maas
4	A Court of Frost and Starlight	Sarah J. Maas
4	A Court of Wings and Ruin	Sarah J. Maas
4	Empire of Storms	Sarah J. Maas
4	House of Earth and Blood	Sarah J. Maas
4	The Kite Runner	Khaled Hosseini
4	Milk and Honey	Rupi Kaur
4	Jesus Land: A Memoir	Julia Scheeres
4	People Kill People	Ellen Hopkins
4	Beautiful	Amy Reed
4	Living Dead Girl	Elizabeth Scott
4	The Perks of Being a Wallflower	Stephen Chbosky
4	All Boys Aren't Blue	George M. Johnson
4	House of Sky and Breath	Sarah J. Maas
4	Slaughterhouse-Five	Kurt Vonnegut
4	Normal People	Sally Rooney
4	The V-Word	Amber Keyser

LOLITA



Lolita

50th ANNIVERSARY EDITION
VLADIMIR NABOKOV

Adult

By Vladimir Nabokov

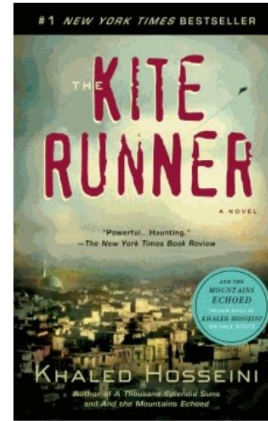
ISBN: 9780307744029



3
/5

Minor Restricted
BookLooks Review Rating

THE KITE RUNNER



Adult

By Khaled Hosseini

ISBN: 9781101217238



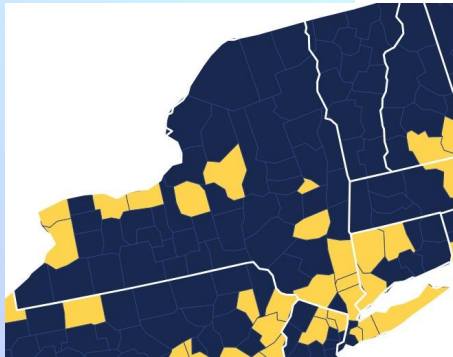
4
/5

Not For Minors
BookLooks Review Rating

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains sexual assault of a minor; prostitution involving minors and adults; and mild/infrequent profanity.

Moms For Liberty



- It only takes 10 “liberty minded” people to launch a chapter
- Active omission of information fuels their success
- Review system is entering schools, libraries across US
- No requirements to join or lead other than attending meetings

Are you trying to get these books banned?

We do **not** support "banning" books. First and foremost, our mission is to inform parents on what is in these books being made available to children in schools. Parents can use this information to provide the proper guidance to children reading any of these books. Parents can also use this information to individually, or through groups representing their interests, engage with school boards to determine what works should be made available to their children while under the custodial care of their schools. We fully support both of these use cases, though we are not directly engaged in the latter. Any books that may be excluded from school libraries would still be available in public libraries or in stores for interested students to procure with parental consent.

If Moms For Liberty doesn't seek to ban books, then what are their members doing, exactly?

No Left Turn in Education



- National group to instill “family values” and parental control in education
- Invested in defunding public education they believe to be politicized
- Explosive growth in 2021 thanks to Tucker Carlson
- Major proponents of homeschooling; fueling “groomer” rhetoric

RatedBooks.Org

“Review” database used to distribute biased information about “inappropriate” books.

“UBC” Ratings

Counting curse words, “sexual” scenes, religious beliefs

LaVerna/Mary in the Library

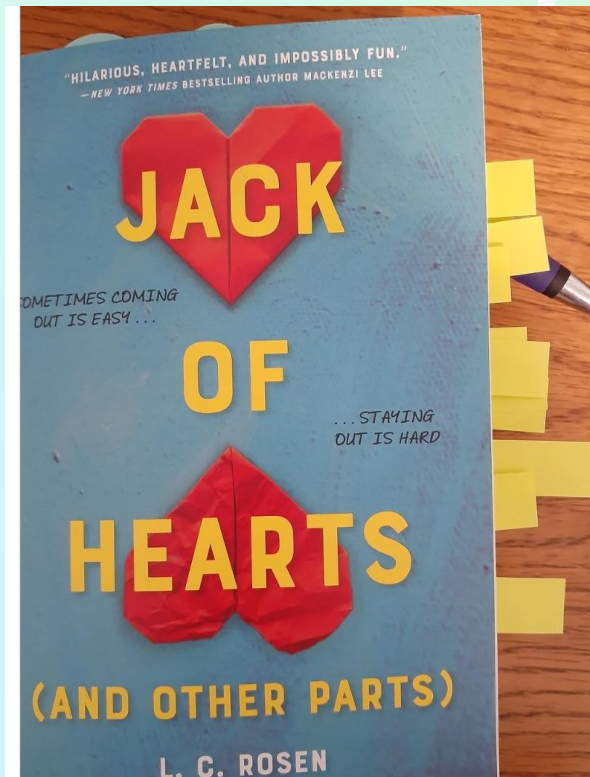
Active Facebook groups tracking *where* the books are located



BookLooks Report: <https://tinyurl.com/mpcm24mx>

Jack of Hearts (And Other Parts) by L C Rosen

Publisher : Little, Brown Books for Young Readers (October 30, 2018)



Mary in the Library/LaVerna in the Library



Brooke Stephens

11h · 🌐

Thank you to all to volunteers who have agreed to challenge books. We only have six books left to challenge in the district. That's almost 50 books that volunteers have agreed to challenge!!! Each parent and student can submit two challenges.

We are still looking for volunteers who have children in the following schools:

Mountain High School

Gabi A Girl in Pieces - Quintero

3/5 rating <https://tinyurl.com/2kh9btyf>

Syracuse High School

<https://tinyurl.com/mse3ff4f>

<https://tinyurl.com/2y6ktsvm>

<https://tinyurl.com/2p8tm8ad>

<https://tinyurl.com/tk396s9d>

North Davis Junior High School

The Opposite of Innocent - Sones

3/5 rating: <https://tinyurl.com/vr5dj53u>

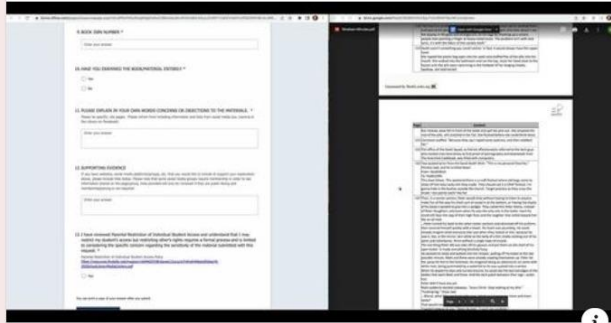
Book Challenge form:

<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=dPKcPX5U9UgN3gGmNuC2B5n4wc8zvrVEim8KLE5ysJZUNFY1UkZV1dXVVJPQVf5WVBLVkJXRJONSQIQCN0PWcu>

<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=dPKcPX5U9UgN3gGmNuC2B5n4wc8zvrVEim8KLE5ysJZUNFY1UkZV1dXVVJPQVf5WVBLVkJXRJONSQIQCN0PWcu>

How to Submit a Book Challenge:

https://youtu.be/lQzxAFKrs_g



YOUTUBE.COM

How to submit a Sensitive materials request in DSD



Tandr Irish

Admin · Group expert · 15h · 🌐

They, She, He, Easy as ABC by Maya & Matthew

Unrated

Book Read Aloud: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXT_zXRdYcs



👍👍👍 15

14 comments

👍 Like

💬 Comment

➡️ Send



Write a comment...



Carey VanderBoon

When was this published?

This is not as easy as ABC exactly the opposite. Confuse these poor kids brains. They barely understand themselves at this age! This insanity needs to stop 🤔

👍. Thanks for continuing to find these books in our libraries. Unfo... See more

Like Reply 15h Edited

↪️ View all 2 replies



Jill Howle Brandenburg

Perfect way to be sure kids have no idea what pronouns are or mean. 🤔 This is asinine from an English language perspective. And the first page makes zero sense.

Like Reply 14h

👍 4

Bruce Friedman, NLTE President, Clay County (FL)



CLAY COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOLS

900 WALNUT STREET, GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FL 32043
 P (904) 336-6500 F (904) 338-4536 W www.clay.k12.fl.us
 SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
 David S. Brodick

Add: additional level: 11/19/22

BOARD MEMBERS:
 Janice Keneke, District 1
 Mary Bolla, District 2
 Beth Clark, District 3
 Tina Bullock, District 4
 Ashley Gillhausen, District 5

Request for Reconsideration or Review of Instructional Materials

Individual Requesting Review: BRUCE FRIEDMAN
 Phone: 917 734 3700 Email: BRUCE.FRIEDMAN@NOLEFTTURN.UG
 Physical Address: 3933 TRAIL RIDGE RD
 City: MIDDLEBURGH State: FL Zip: 32069
 School: RIDGEVIEW etc Grade Level: HS etc Subject: VARIES

Check as applicable:

- I represent a special interest group named NOLEFTTURN IN EDUCATION FLORIDA
- I already have a copy of the material
- I will review the material on-site
- I wish to check out the material for a two-week period

Type of Instructional Material:

- Novel
- Textbook
- Workbook
- Symbol
- Video (YouTube, DVD, etc.)
- Other: VARIES

Title: Someday
 Author: David Levithan ISBN: 978-0-399-58305-9

1. What is your interest or reason for this request? PROTECT CHILDREN

2. What is objectionable about the material: specific pages, chapters, language, scenes?
 Attach additional information, if necessary. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT PAGES
COMMON CORE
CSE
SEL
PELLICRE/ANTI-POLICE
SEXUAL CONTENT

BAD AUTHOR

3. What do you believe might be the result of a student using this material?

DAMAGED SOULS

4. For what age group would you recommend this material? ~~ADULT~~

5. Is there anything good in this material? NA

6. Would you care to recommend another instructional material in the same format, covering the same subject or content standards? If so, please list the title, author, publisher, and ISBN: NA

Printed name of Complainant: BRUCE FRIEDMAN

Signature of Complainant: [Signature]

Date: 7/28/2022

Please submit the completed form and any additional documentation to:

Clay County District Schools
 Attn: Supervisor of Instructional Resources
 900 Walnut Street
 Green Cove Springs, Florida 32043

To be completed by Instructional Resources Office Staff:

- Received in Instructional Resources: Date 8/12/22 by 85
- Attachments were included with this form. Total number of pages _____
- The form was fully completed and accepted. Yes/No If not, why? NO OBJ
- Date Committee convened: _____
- Committee Members: _____

- Outcome: _____
- Notification of Complainant: Date _____ by _____
- Additional Information: _____

Summary of Someday by David Levithan

[Sex; theft; CRT; CSE; anti religion; promiscuity]

Format p # and content/keyword - my comments follow

P 30 "where the fuck have you been?" - charming

P 31 "What the fuck is that?" ... "Who the fuck is Leigh" ... "Don't you fucking tell me to calm down" - Noticing a trend yet? Is this a trend you want our children to follow?

P 32 "I could smash her face in...I could knock out her teeth or crack her skull" - Lovely

P 67 "Even when I was punished with a female body, I knew to act and think like a man"...an advantage...being white" ... "pocket some Advil" - Foreshadowing of unpleasant CSE and CRT content ahead.

P 100 "I don't want to go home. I want sex" - Notice he did not say "love and respect."

P 100 "goes onto an app...really a hookup..." - So we glamorize the lesson for our children to use the internet to connect with frivolous promiscuity. Why?

P 203 "queer lit...gender nonbinary" - fabulous discussion.

P 221 "You're saying 'they' and 'them'" - An individual is NOT a "them!"

P 285 "uberassholes" - Imagine if the books in school libraries demonstrated useful vocabulary instead.

P 289 "dad throwing around Pope jokes" - Nice dad.

P 290-291 "We're in a no-fuckery zone. And you are bringing fuckery into it." - If you speak without all this profanity, your life will improve.

P 291 "everything but equality, Sir" - Playing the victim card, again.

P 338 "I am intersex and equal" - No, you need therapy and better parents.

Bruce keeps his own diary of naughty books & challenges 100s at a time.

Bruce is fun at parties

es, Bronwen

[Book /

strations by

tc={819721D8-D5C9-40C... 1 min ago

[Threaded comment]

Your version of Excel allows you to read this threaded comment; however, any edits to it will get removed if the file is opened in a newer version of Excel. Learn more: <https://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/?linkid=870924>

Comment:

P&P; see hit piece at bookriot.com too. <https://bookriot.com/clay-county-district-schools-book-bans/>

Reply:

And this: <https://msmagazine.com/author/kjensen/>

Show less

 Reply  Delete



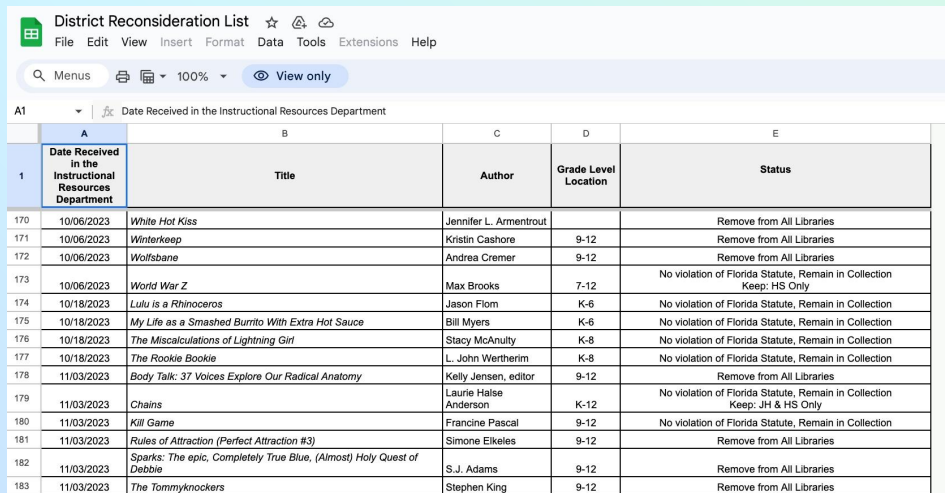
Attention America! - Before you get overwhelmed: Note that this is a list of any book challenged anywhere by anyone! It is always going to grow. I have compiled and shared this so we can avoid duplicating efforts and to show the SIZE of the problem (inappropriate materials in our schools). On a total of thirty-three very rare occasions, I have found no valid reason to challenge a particular book and so I removed it from the list. Otherwise, like the problems in our public schools, it just grows. This list is updated 3 or 4 times monthly.

You'll see that many book's titles are connected to a link. These linked titles will direct you to enough information to challenge the book in your own district, even if you've never read the book yourself. You'll often find some content or summaries or excerpts that can be accessed so YOU can decide for yourself if you even want to challenge a book. I have challenged MANY HUNDREDS OF linked titles in Clay County, Florida.

*See also the little purple highlights in some cells for comments. There's a comment in this cell. Hover your mouse over it now, please. Then, click on the comment so you can scroll down to see it all.

He's not banning books, though. He's challenging them. Especially when the author doesn't agree with his agenda.

Defenders of “Freedom of Speech” Love Censorship.



District Reconsideration List

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Extensions Help

Search: Menus 100% View only

A1 Date Received in the Instructional Resources Department

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Date Received in the Instructional Resources Department	Title	Author	Grade Level Location	Status
170	10/06/2023	<i>White Hot Kiss</i>	Jennifer L. Armentrout		Remove from All Libraries
171	10/06/2023	<i>Winterkeep</i>	Kristin Cashore	9-12	Remove from All Libraries
172	10/06/2023	<i>Wolfsbane</i>	Andrea Cremer	9-12	Remove from All Libraries
173	10/06/2023	<i>World War Z</i>	Max Brooks	7-12	No violation of Florida Statute, Remain in Collection Keep: HS Only
174	10/18/2023	<i>Lulu is a Rhinoceros</i>	Jason Flom	K-6	No violation of Florida Statute, Remain in Collection
175	10/18/2023	<i>My Life as a Smashed Burrito With Extra Hot Sauce</i>	Bill Myers	K-6	No violation of Florida Statute, Remain in Collection
176	10/18/2023	<i>The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl</i>	Stacy McAnulty	K-8	No violation of Florida Statute, Remain in Collection
177	10/18/2023	<i>The Rookie Bookie</i>	L. John Wertherim	K-8	No violation of Florida Statute, Remain in Collection
178	11/03/2023	<i>Body Talk: 37 Voices Explore Our Radical Anatomy</i>	Kelly Jensen, editor	9-12	Remove from All Libraries
179	11/03/2023	<i>Chains</i>	Laurie Halse Anderson	K-12	No violation of Florida Statute, Remain in Collection Keep: JH & HS Only
180	11/03/2023	<i>Kill Game</i>	Francine Pascal	9-12	No violation of Florida Statute, Remain in Collection
181	11/03/2023	<i>Rules of Attraction (Perfect Attraction #3)</i>	Simone Elkeles	9-12	Remove from All Libraries
182	11/03/2023	<i>Sparks: The epic, Completely True Blue, (Almost) Holy Quest of Debbie</i>	S.J. Adams	9-12	Remove from All Libraries
183	11/03/2023	<i>The Tommyknockers</i>	Stephen King	9-12	Remove from All Libraries

Bruce got my book **Body Talk** banned in Clay County, Florida, schools because of my reporting on him.



No Left Turn in Education · Follow

September 22, 2022 · 🌐



"In America, "banned" books are celebrated, commissioned, and distributed on the manufactured outrage that they are "banned." It's like having a party every day to protest how you're never allowed to have parties. Banned Books Week is a marketing campaign pretending to be a protest, and this year they are marketing to groomers. When nine out of the Top Ten Most Challenged Books are "considered to be sexually explicit" or "considered to have sexually explicit images," Banned Books Week looks a lot more like Porn For Kids Week. Even The Boston Globe rewrote an article after it falsely stated that I called to ban books."



Nicoletta Nicole ► Ohio Group Against The Indoctrination of Critical Race Theory

Nicoletta Nicole · September 22, 2022 · 🌐

Banned Books Week is fake.

Read my op-ed to see why.



FOXNEWS.COM

Banned Books Week looks more like Porn for Kids Week

Banned Books Week is a marketing campaign pretending to be a protest. Nine out of the M...

**New York
Book Crisis
Actors &
Affiliates
Include...**

- Western New York Students First
-
- Mass Resistance
-
- Moms For Liberty
-
- No Left Turn in Education
-

Groups also seem to be coming out of local organizations, including churches and gyms (See this story out of Hamburg!)

Of the over 3,000 instances of books banned in the 2022–23 school year, 11 books were banned in 22 districts or more.

Most banned books of the 2022-2023 school year, by district



33 bans



Tricks

29 bans



The Bluest Eye

27 bans



Looking for Alaska

27 bans



A Court of Mist and Fury

26 bans



Gender Queer: A Memoir

25 bans



The Perks of Being a Wallflower

24 bans



Thirteen Reasons Why

24 bans



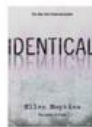
Sold

23 bans



Crank

22 bans



Identical

22 bans



Empire of Storms

Data from PEN America Index of School Book Bans.

These most frequently banned titles are largely young adult novels featuring female, queer, and/or nonbinary protagonists.

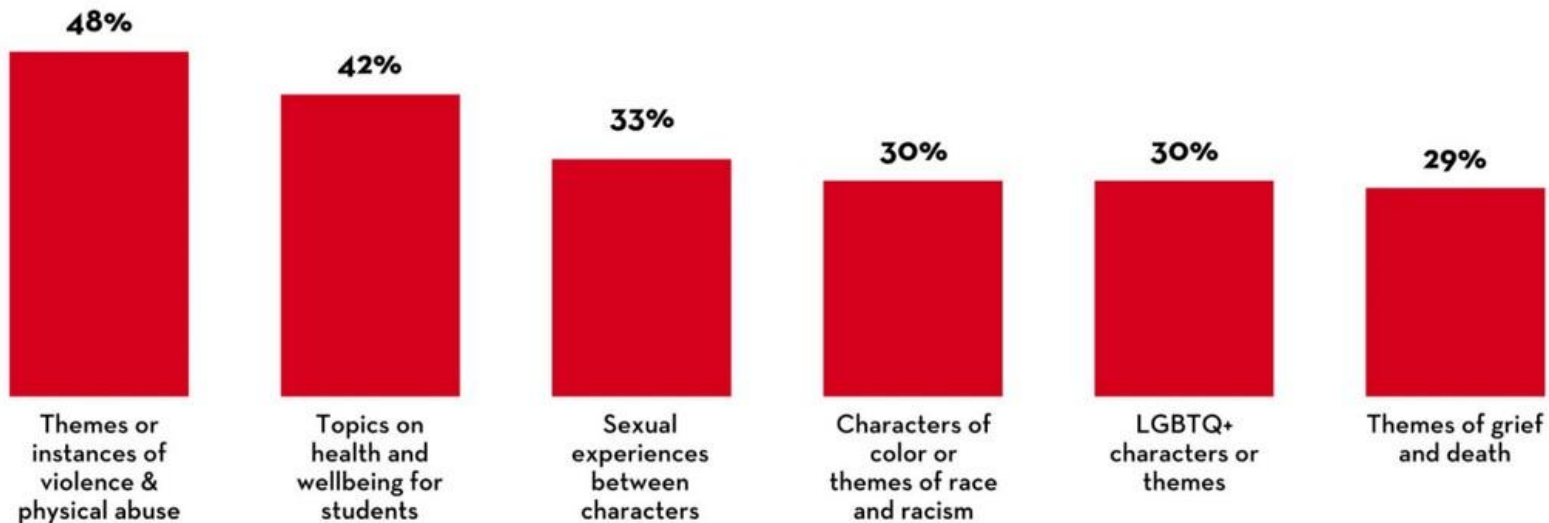
**86% of books banned in
schools during the
2022-2020 school year were
removed from “only” one or
two schools.**

Subject matter of banned content

Of the 3,362 instances of book bans July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023



Note: many titles contain more than one type of content.



Data from PEN America Index of School Book Bans, July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023.



**It Is All A Game of Mis-,
Dis-, and Mal-
Information Through
Semantics**

See: Liberty, Parental Rights, Sexuality Education,
Grooming, Pornography, Culture War, etc.



& The Semantics Aren't Even Good

Blame the media here: "Culture War" isn't what is happening.



2.

What Are The Future Targets?

Keeping Up With & Getting Ahead of the Agenda

Public Libraries & Their Funding

- Patmos Library (Jamestown, Michigan): Funding voted down multiple times thanks to misinformation campaign over 4 queer books on shelves.
- Ridgeland, Missouri, mayor withheld funding over queer books to county library.
- Samuels Public Library (VA): 53 members of a Catholic church convinced the county commissioner to withhold funding for not removing LGBTQ+ books they disliked.
- Dayton Memorial Library (OR) faced closure due to a small, vocal group of book banners.
- At Akron Public Library (PA), attempts to defund because the library doesn't "reflect conservative values."
- Attempts to defund public libraries in Llano County, Texas, following judicial order to put queer books back on shelves
- Threats to defund Westborough Public Library (MA) over a scientifically-accurate book for middle schoolers about...vaginas. By a medical doctor.

**Rockwell
Falls Public
Library in
Lake
Luzerne, NY**



After a small group of "concerned citizens" were angry about a drag storytime, those "concerned citizens" harassed staff. Staff quit in response—as of late November, there are three vacancies on the board and thus, no quorum. This community has had no public library for months.



Library Cooperatives

- If your library is connected to others via cooperative or interlibrary loan agreements, what stops citizens from demanding dissolution?
- Has not been a huge issue–yet. Once the local level work is done, they’ll come here next. Why? “Indoctrination,” “Porn Peddling,” beliefs related to library workers
- Macon County, North Carolina: anti-LGBTQ+ “activists” demand end of relationship with Fontana System due to *potential to access material they don’t like*. (They stayed for now).



Professional Library Organizations

- Deep distrust and misinformation around ALA; Montana, Wyoming, Alabama, and several other states have withdrawn membership.
- Protests outside Texas Library Association conference (2022), Pennsylvania School Library Conference (2023)–why? Disliking the books, library workers, speakers, you name it.
- “World Library Association”: book banners + antagonists created their own association, to include Board members who ousted Campbell County, Wyoming's library director.



Karlyn Borysenko ✓
@DrKarlynB

Subscribe



🔴 EXCLUSIVE 🔴

I spent the last three days undercover at the largest socialist conference in the country.

That's where I caught American Library Association President Emily Drabinski saying explicitly that libraries (and public schools) need to be sites of socialist organizing.



10:48 AM · Sep 4, 2023 · 244.2K Views



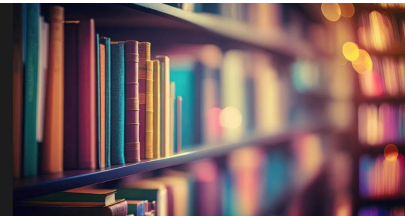
719 Reposts 127 Quotes 1,136 Likes 122 Bookmarks

This individual—who is a published author—has recorded several presentations by anti-censorship activists, edited out the context, and fueled stories that are simply not true.

LOCAL NEWS

Illinois libraries urged to withdraw from American Library Association after claims its leader identifies as Marxist

by: John Clark
Posted: Jul 25, 2023 / 11:18 AM CDT
Updated: Jul 25, 2023 / 11:25 AM CDT



An image with a blurry background shows a library bookshelf with many books on it. Generative AI

SHARE



SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (WTVO) — The Illinois Freedom Caucus is urging public libraries across the state to withdraw from the American Library Association after its president allegedly proclaimed herself as a Marxist.

Kizik® easy on, easy off shoes



School Libraries

- If the books won't be removed, why not remove the libraries? Spotsylvania School District proposal (their board president also suggested burning naughty books)*
- Flagler County (FL) school board member suggests a similar idea.

*We'll see this district again.



Book Fairs

- Scholastic book fairs have seen several challenges, including book removals and canceling of events that won't restrict LGBTQ+ titles
- Adults volunteer to staff the book fairs in order to determine what kids can or cannot purchase or read, such as in Hastings, Minnesota



Moms for Liberty, Lake County IL

4d · 🌐



Thought Scholastic book fairs were age appropriate and safe content?

THINK AGAIN 📖

Ask your school to consider alternatives

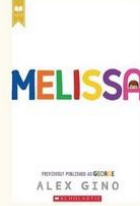


5

quotes you won't believe are in

SCHOLASTIC CHILDREN'S BOOKS

1



"She immersed her body in the warm water and tried not to think about what was between her legs, but there it was, bobbing in front of her." Pg 28, Melissa. A children's book for ages 8-12



2

"Blockers basically press pause on puberty! Stop you developing breasts n' stuff...sign me up!" Pg 89, Welcome to St. Hell. A young adult book for 14 year olds

3



"We even had a trans kid come out in third grade. I'll bet there are more now." Pg 158, Rick. Recommended ages are children 8-12



+3 4

"... he had recently realized about himself: that when it came to love and romance, his feelings were aimed at other guys." pg 2, The Language of Seabirds. Ages 8-12



3

8 comments 2 shares

Apparently, allowing other people's children to buy the books for themselves is not appropriate, either.



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release 11/10/2023

It has become undeniable that a regularly occurring conduit for inappropriate books into schools across Oklahoma is through Scholastic, particularly through their book fairs. As we are in the thick of the fall book fair season, far too many books that are in direct violation of the rules and laws put forth by Oklahoma Legislation are appearing at these fairs across the state. Scholastic, a once trusted company that happens to be one of the top publishers of children's books, now appears largely focused on indoctrinating youth with radical viewpoints and sexual ideologies from a very young age at an increasingly rapid rate.

Moms for Liberty Oklahoma strongly encourages all parents to pay extremely close attention to the materials advertised and displayed by Scholastic inside their children's schools. It is a parent's right to visit the library and the book fair at their child's school and to oversee what they may be exposed to during the school day. We also implore Media Specialists and Administrators to be on the lookout for these inappropriate materials making their way in. Furthermore, Oklahoma Legislators must hold their districts accountable to the laws that have been set forth specifically to protect our youth.

We condemn the current nature of the business that Scholastic is exhibiting and look forward to alternative publishers and book fair companies embracing materials dedicated to building the academia, character, and morality of our youth while respecting the values and traditions of parents. Moms for Liberty Oklahoma vehemently opposes Scholastic remaining a vendor to our schools across the state. This organization has taken a strong stance on its ideological beliefs and they in no way align with Oklahoma values. We encourage school board members to look further into finding an alternative for their districts and implementing a replacement as soon as possible. Let's continue helping students, teachers, families, and school districts to thrive by eliminating a direct source of these issues that also become a constant drain of valuable time and energy. Children deserve more literary options that are healthy, educational, and positive and there are far better ways to achieve this.



SkyTree Book Fairs
@SkyTreeFairs · [Follow](#)



Get ready for our first SkyTree fair at a public school in Fredericksburg, Virginia!

Food trucks
Music
[@KirkCameron](#)

This will be the perfect Christmastime event to get your holiday shopping done and support SkyTree Book Fairs.

Save, share, send 🌟

A promotional poster for the SkyTree Book Fairs Winter Book Fair. The top features the "SKYTREE BOOK FAIRS" logo in blue and white. Below, the event details are listed: "WINTER BOOK FAIR" in red, "DEC 02" in large yellow and blue text, and the location "Riverbend High School, 12302 Spotswood Furnace Rd." in black. The time "9AM - 2PM" is shown in red. A green banner lists "MUSIC | HOT COCOA & COFFEE | FOOD TRUCKS". A photo of Superintendent Mark Taylor is shown at the bottom left, holding a book titled "The Fox, the Fair, and the Invention Scare". Text next to the photo states: "Superintendent Mark Taylor sponsors the Winter SkyTree book fair, featuring a book reading and signing by Kirk Cameron." The background of the poster is light blue with a large green tree illustration on the right.

11:57 AM · Nov 10, 2023

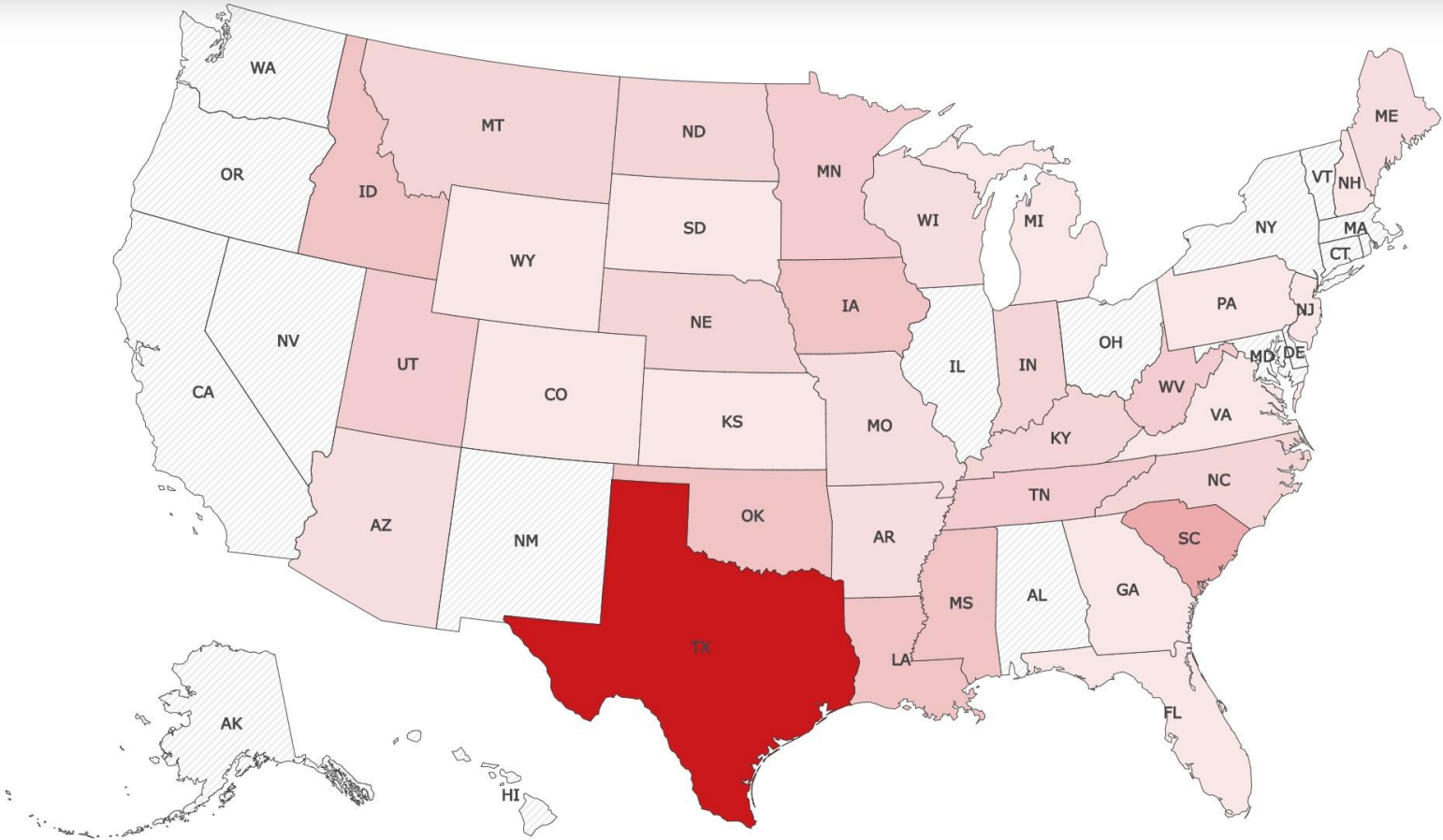




**Publishers
Themselves**

- Our friends in Texas don't want to legislate guns, but they do want to sue publishers who "knowingly" "distribute" what they consider obscene materials and fail to "appropriate" rate them (it's queer books, y'all).
- Tennessee, too.

Book Ban Legislation, 2023



Total Bills: 113

Anti-Censorship Legislation, 2023



Illinois General Assembly

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Bill Status of HB2789 103rd General Assembly

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Short Description: LIBRARY SYSTEMS-BOOK BANNING

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(Sen. [Laura M. Murphy](#) - [Paul Faraci](#) and [Laura Fine](#))

Hearings
Executive Hearing Apr 19 2023 2:00PM Capitol 212 Springfield, IL

Last Action

Date	Chamber	Action
4/12/2023	Senate	Assigned to Executive

Statutes Amended In Order of Appearance

[75 ILCS 10/1](#) from Ch. 81, par. 111

[75 ILCS 10/3](#) from Ch. 81, par. 113

75 ILCS 10/8.7 new

Ban Book Bans: Illinois resource to protect intellectual freedom.

Other states:

New York*

Massachusetts

New Jersey

Pennsylvania*

Wisconsin*

*But Also...

Requires school boards to make the final decision on whether to keep, remove, or restrict access to an instructional material in a school library; establishes a review process for formal complaints concerning instructional materials that are the subject of complaints.

2023-S7766 (ACTIVE) - SPONSOR MEMO

BILL NUMBER: S7766

SPONSOR: MURRAY

TITLE OF BILL:

An act to amend the education law and the public officers law, in relation to establishing the "public school instructional materials review and transparency act"

Other Targets—both brewing and likely.

Central Arkansas school district drops library's digital learning tools, citing lack of 'filter'

Officials want "more clarity as to what's acceptable and what's not," district spokeswoman says

BY: TESS VRBIN - NOVEMBER 17, 2023 4:07 PM

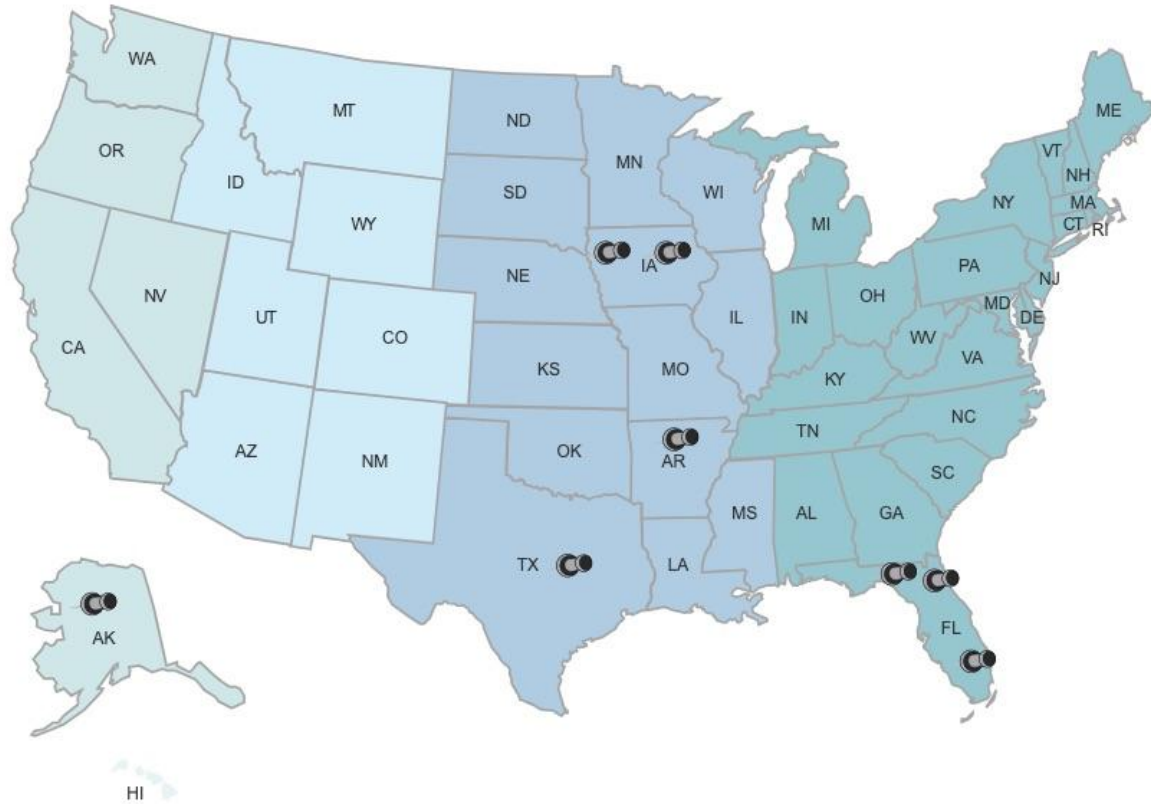


- Book Award Committees: because many collection policies require purchase of award-winning books, it's no leap to see why book banners want a say in those books. (Fun fact: Illinois **students** named *Gender Queer* to the state awards list).
- Community Colleges, 4-Year Colleges, and Universities: See New College of Florida.
- Apps which grant access to books (see Mississippi and Arkansas)

**These manufactured
problems have neat capitalist
solutions to them from the
very people creating the
moral panic.**

The Way Out Is Coming, Though...

Current Lawsuits Related to Book Bans & Book Ban Legislation



3.


Book Bans, Trauma, & Mental Health

Nurturing a Safe Environment for Library Workers



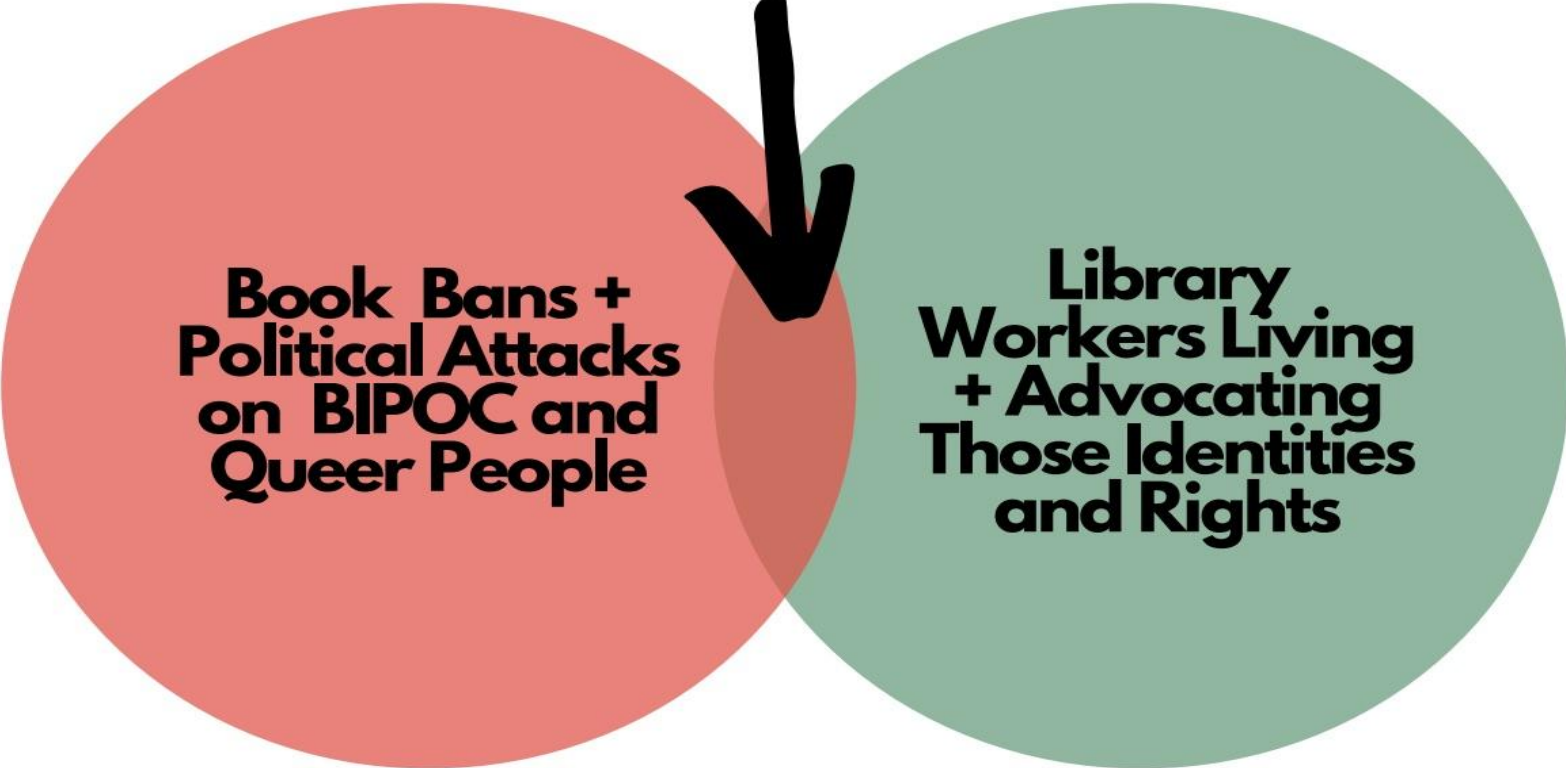
What Is Trauma?

- Trauma is the response to an event—not the event itself
- Trauma keeps the body in perpetual fight-flight-freeze
- Trauma is not just PTSD or C-PTSD. It's part of anyone's experience




**Trauma Is a
Public
Health Issue**

- What does a trauma-informed approach to librarianship look like, especially in times of heightened political rhetoric directly targeting library workers?
- Trauma disintegrates social support systems, decreases job satisfaction, and has serious consequences for individuals, including neurological changes



**Book Bans +
Political Attacks
on BIPOC and
Queer People**



**Library
Workers Living
+ Advocating
Those Identities
and Rights**

Where Trauma Occurs

Censors take advantage of this human vulnerability.

Wear someone down enough and their body and mind stop responding normally.

Trauma, Mental Health, & Working With the Public

Trauma



Burnout



Overt + Casual Cruelty



Compassion Fatigue



Vicarious trauma



Inclusive, safe
spaces for *all*,
including staff





The Long Term Reality

- Overlooking mental health and trauma in libraries means creating a toxic work environment, translating to a toxic space for community users
- A lack of support leads to burnout and the loss of vital voices in the community
- A field seeking to be more representative of the diversity of our world loses those staff members and perspectives.

Create a policy for when staff need an escape because of potential triggering interactions or events and include in your employee documents

Employee Support - Self-Care Parachute

RNMG supports employees in being able to step away from work during moments of crisis, collective trauma, or attack on marginalized communities. We recognize the importance of removing responsibility for that process from affected employees and have created the flowchart below to guide proactive conversations between managers and employees.

When an incident occurs, managers will reach out to employees in the affected community. If the employees elect to pull the self-care parachute, managers will be responsible for collecting a list of the tasks to be delegated for an agreed upon time period and will work with other staff to coordinate their completion. If the manager is also affected by the incident, they will notify the next available manager or member of the executive team, who will then be responsible for collecting and delegating tasks.

When an employee opts not pull the parachute, the manager will check back in the following day. Employees may change their minds and opt in at any time.

Employees affected by an incident may also contact their managers at any time to initiate this process. If your direct manager is not immediately available, please contact the next available manager or any member of the executive team. We want you to be able to step away as soon as possible.

The self-care parachute is intended for temporary delegation of time-sensitive responsibilities and in most instances will not require the use of PTO.

Diffuse Fight-Flight-Freeze Responses

Create a Safety Plan

Do you feel safe in your current environment and your home?

If not, determine what space you may need to turn to for that in moments of crisis.

Walk away from triggering space as soon as possible

Develop a self-care plan

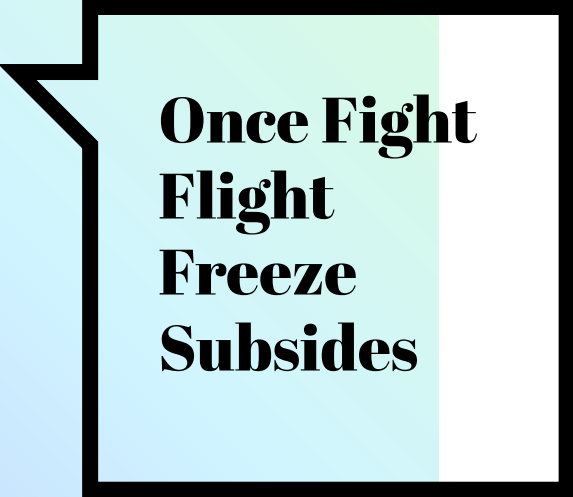
Who will you contact when you need to pull the parachute?

How will you respond to further questions or comments from patrons/trustees/parents/other stakeholders?

Are you going to monitor conversations outside of your space or not?

Spend 5-10 minutes focusing on your breathing to activate the parasympathetic (rest and digest) nervous system

Move your body either with a walk, some light yoga, or other physical activity—shake it out or dance to 3 or 4 favorite fast paced songs



**Once Fight
Flight
Freeze
Subsides**

- Do I need professional assistance outside my workplace to better understand these reactions?
- Record everything that transpired; document everything, even if in hindsight it feels minor. It's not.
- Create a document of your professional values and responsibilities and post it somewhere to remind you that the work you're doing is important.



**Be an ally/accomplice and step in to help
your most marginalized colleagues**



★ **Consider
This:**

Book bans offer something librarianship has not put enough time or consideration into: how to adequately care for, support, and accommodate the mental health and safety needs of its most valuable asset: its people.

More Resources

ProQOL: The Professional Quality of Life resource from Center for Victims of Torture offers tons of tools, guides, and insight into building a healthy professional life; may be useful for those seeking mental health to talk with their counselor about an assessment via proQOL.

Urban Library Trauma Study: Research on the unique trauma associated with working in an urban library; fortunately, less relevant to book bans right now, but an important look at trauma in librarianship more broadly.

Trauma-Informed Librarianship 101 (Karina Hagelin): A toolkit for learning how to practice trauma-informed librarianship; useful for librarians and for working with patrons.

NASTAD: A useful self-assessment on burnout and secondary trauma that might help you in figuring out self-care next steps.



Thank You!

Any Questions?