



Unite Against Book Bans

An Initiative of the American Library Association

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Unite Against Book Bans is a national initiative to empower readers everywhere to stand together in the fight against censorship.

ALAPOLICYCORPS

ALA American Library Association



The ALA Policy Corps aims to expand our ability to advocate on key policy issues on behalf of the library community. Participants focus on issues for which deep and sustained knowledge are necessary to advance ALA policy goals and library values among policymakers.



ala.org/advocacy/ala-policy-corps



FREE PEOPLE READ FREELY

[Freedom to Read Statement](#)

“The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.”

Books, Sex, and A Tradition of Censorship



AT WAR WITH VICE.

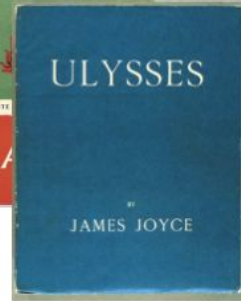
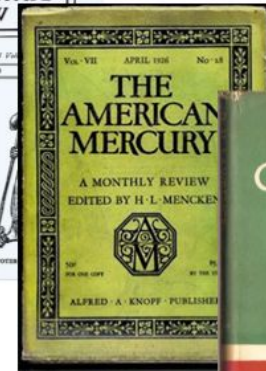
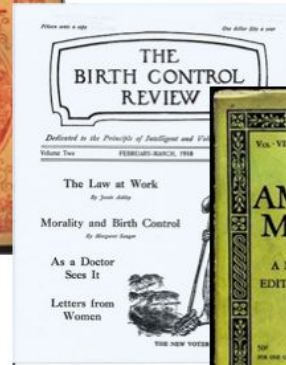
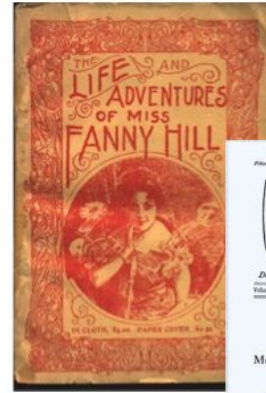
**Anthony Comstock and His
Great Detective Work.**

PURE ART AND LITERATURE.

**Tons of Illegal Matter Captured in
His Raids.**

HATED BY CRIMINAL CLASSES.

**Shot at Many Times, Once Stabbed,
Infernal Machines and Small-
pox Laden Rags Sent Him.**



ALA American Library Association

Number of Attempts to Ban or Restrict Library Materials in the U.S. by Year



 **Unite
Against
Book Bans**

[UNITEAGAINSTBOOKBANS.ORG](https://uniteagainstbookbans.org)





REASONS FOR CHALLENGES

OBSCENE **LGBTQIA** **WOKE** **PORNOGRAPHY**
SEXUALLY EXPLICIT **CRITICAL RACE THEORY** **PROFANITY**
ANTI-POLICE **SEX EDUCATION** **ANTI-SEMITIC** **PEDOPHILIA** **DRUGS** **POLITICAL VIEWPOINT**
RACIST CONTENT **OBSCURE** **ANTI-FAMILY** **BLAOK** **NON-TRADITIONAL VALUES** **ANTI-SEMITIC** **RAPE** **SEXUALIZATION OF WOMEN** **MASTURBATION** **VIOLENCE** **POLARIZING**
HOMOPHOBIC OR TRANSPHOBIC **LOW LITERARY VALUE** **OCULT** **GROOMING** **ABORTION** **WHITE PRIVILEGE** **PROMOTED A HOMOSEXUAL LIFESTYLE**
DEVELOPMENTALLY INAPPROPRIATE **ANTI-FAMILY** **GENDER DYSPHORIA** **MAKES WHITE BABIES FEEL SAD** **SUICIDE** **UNSAFE OR CAUSES HARM** **HARMFUL MISINFORMATION** **RELIGIOUS VIEWPOINT** **OFFENSIVE CHINESE STEREOTYPES**
PROBLEMATIC AUTHOR **NOT A HAPPY ENDING** **RACIALLY DIVISIVE** **CHILD ABUSE** **NUDITY** **USE OF DEROGATORY TERM FOR AFRICAN-AMERICANS**
BIASED AND UNBALANCED **PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL AGENDA** **DANGEROUS AND DETRIMENTAL** **PROMOTES RACISM** **HATEFUL** **INDOCTRINATING KIDS** **INFLAMMATORY** **CRITICAL RACE THEORY** **PROFANITY**

Each word and phrase in this graphic is cited from 2021 censorship reports

What is Obscenity? What is “Harmful to Minors”?

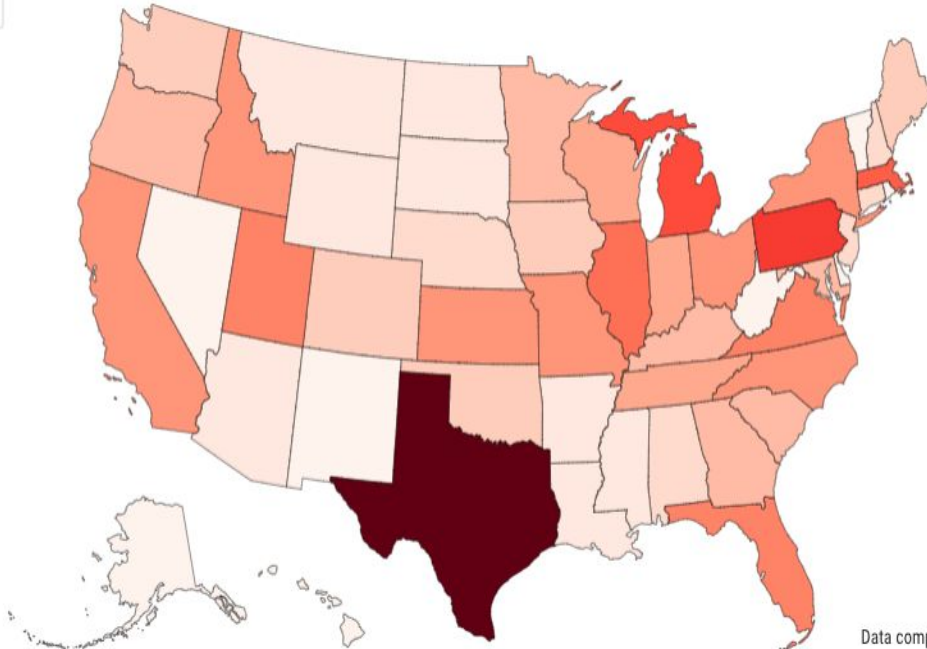
The material must meet all three parts of the legal test established by the Supreme Court in the *Miller v. California* decision:

- Whether the average person, applying “contemporary community standards” would find **the work, as a whole, appeals to the “prurient interest,”**
- Whether the work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, **sexual conduct *specifically defined by the applicable state law***, and
- Whether the work, taken as a whole, **lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value.**
- In regards to “harmful to minors” or “obscene as to minors” materials, the test parallels the obscenity test set forth in *Miller*, but the considerations are in the context of offensiveness and serious value for minors.

What's happening in New England?

Attempts to Restrict Access to Books in 2022

An attempt may include challenges to multiple titles



Data compiled by: [American Library Association – Office for Intellectual Freedom](#)

Maine

Legislative Bills

- **LD 123** - Eliminate the Educational Purposes Exception to the Prohibition on the Dissemination of Obscene Matter to Minors ONTP 6/12/23)
- **LD 618** - Eliminate Critical Race Theory, Social & Emotional Learning, and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion from School Curricula ONTP 5/23/23
- **LD 1008** Establish a Rating System for Books in School Libraries ONTP 6/8/23
- **LD 1333** - Protect Children by Modernizing Internet and Digital Media Filtering Requirements for Education

Censorship Data

- 18 official challenges*; 23 challenged titles*
- Top three challenged titles: *Gender Queer* (6); *White Fragility* (3); *Beyond Magenta* (2)
- 94% of these challenges took place in a school
- The common justifications for these challenges (based on reconsideration forms filed):
 - LGBTQIA+ representation (10)
 - Considered book to be sexually explicit (7)
 - EDI content (social justice, race, racism) (4)

**Note that this information only includes REPORTED challenges. There were likely more challenges in Maine schools & libraries in 2022.*

Politics

Republican proposals would add restrictions to books in Maine school libraries

Maine Public | By Robbie Feinberg
Published May 9, 2023 at 4:24 PM EDT



Sebastian / AP/Wide

Rhode Island

Legislative Bills

- **H5671/S494** - Relating To Education -- School Committees And Superintendents
 - RILA Supported
 - Outcome: Passed by both houses; signed by RI Governor 6/19/23
- **H6066** - Relating To Criminal Offenses -- Obscene And Objectionable Publications And Shows
 - RILA Supported
 - Outcome: Held for further study
- **H6316/S938** - Resolution Proclaiming April 23-29, 2023, To Be “National Library Week” In The State Of Rhode Island
 - Crafted by RILA in conjunction with state legislators. Passed in House and Senate and read on 4/25/23, RILA’s Advocacy Day at the State House
- **H6324** - Relating To Criminal Offenses -- Obscene And Objectionable Publications And Shows
 - RILA Opposed
 - Outcome: Stalled. Reactionary bill in opposition to H6066 and introduced during National Library Week

Censorship Data

- 4 Reported challenges* to date (1 Material, 1 Internet-based, 1 Service, 1 Religious)
- 50% public libraries/school libraries

**Note that this information only includes REPORTED challenges. There were likely more challenges.*



New Hampshire

Legislative Bills in 2023 Legislative Session

- House Bill 61: relative to teaching on discrimination in the public schools and discrimination in public workplaces
 - NHLA supported
 - Laid on the table
- House Bill 72: relative to the tenure of public librarians
 - NHLA opposed
 - Bill was significantly amended in committee and signed into law
- House Bill 514: relative to the tenure of public librarians
 - NHLA opposed
 - Bill was significantly amended in committee and signed into law



Legislative Service Requests for 2024 Session

- LSR 2147: relative to the licensing of electronic literary materials by libraries
- LSR 2274: relative to parent access to children's library records
- LSR 2291; relative to school district collection development and reconsideration policies
- LSR 2454: relative to the establishment of library collection development policies
- LSR 2457: relative to the private rights of action by school or library employees
- LSR 2611: relative to the dissolution of library boards of trustees (withdrawn by LSR sponsor)

New Hampshire



Censorship Data*

- 12 challenges to 41 titles
- Titles challenged in 2021-22
 - A is for Activist, Across a Field of Starlight, All are Welcome, Amber and Clay, AntiRacist Baby, Blubber
 - Body Talk: 37 Voices Explore Our Radical Anatomy, The City Beautiful, D'Vaughn and Kris Plan a Wedding
 - Fighting Words, Finding Junie Kim, Flamer, Forever, Fred Gets Dressed, Gender Queer, Golden Boys
 - The Henna Wars, Here and Queer, I Think Our Son is Gay v.1, I am Jazz, If I Ran the Zoo,
 - Julian at the Wedding, Lawn Boy (Evison), The Lesbiana's Guide to Catholic School, Let's Talk About It
 - Melissa (previously published as George, Our Dreams at Dusk, Peaces, The Perks of Being a Wallflower
 - The Police and Excessive Use of Force, Queer History of the United States, A Quick & Easy Guide to Asexuality
 - Rainbow Revolutionaries, The Real Anthony Fauci, Santiago's Road Home, Surviving the City
 - Tell Me How to Be, Thirsty Mermaids, This Book is Gay, To Paradise, Trans Figured, Turtles All the Way Down
 - We Make it Better:mThe LGBTQ Community and Their Positive Contributions to Society
 - What is Black Lives Matter?, What is White Privilege?, Who Was Frida Kahlo?

**Note that this information only includes REPORTED challenges. There were likely more challenges*

Connecticut

Legislative Bills

2 on ebooks --HB6829 AN ACT MAKING CERTAIN TERMS IN ELECTRONIC BOOK AND DIGITAL AUDIO BOOK LICENSE AGREEMENTS OR CONTRACTS UNENFORCEABLE (Government Administration & Elections committee) & HB6800 HB6800 AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTRONIC BOOK AND DIGITAL AUDIO BOOK LICENSING (Planning & Development Committee)

—HB6800 this is the second year of attempting a bill in P&D committee

The largest difference this year was making sure the language was based on contract law and not copyright law.

Sb2 was a surprise that included library language. The bill restores state funding to libraries as long as they have a collection policy and reconsideration policies that have been furnished to the state library.



**LEADING THE WAY
SINCE 1891**

Connecticut

Censorship Data

REPORTED TO ALA:

2022-- 13 TITLES AND 13 ATTEMPTS

2023 (AS OF 8/31/23)—14 ATTEMPTS AND 109 TITLES

COUNTLESS MORE HAVE NOT BEEN REPORTED IN A NUMBER OF COMMUNITIES

**Note that this information only includes REPORTED challenges.*



LEADING THE WAY
SINCE 1891

Reading is a foundational skill, critical to future learning and to exercising our democratic freedoms.

We can trust individuals to make their own decisions about what they read and believe.

Parents have the right to guide their children's reading, but parents should not be making decisions for other parents' children. Specifically, a small group of parents should not dictate what books other people's children are allowed to read.

Books are tools for understanding complex issues. Limiting young people's access to books does not protect them from life's complex and challenging issues.

Young people deserve to see themselves reflected in a library's books.

Removing and banning books from public libraries is a slippery slope to government censorship and the erosion of our country's commitment to freedom of expression.

Please reject any efforts to ban books and allow individuals and parents to make the decision about what they can read and believe.

Visit UniteAgainstBookBans.org to learn more and to join our efforts.

Actions You Can Start Today!

- Be prepared!
- Use and share the UABB toolkit and [join the campaign](#)
- Build relationships and leverage networks
- Sign up for your state chapter advocacy alerts
- Create a proactive strategy to navigate challenges
- Create, review, update, and be familiar with your reconsideration policy
- Create an FAQ and talking points
- Educate your administration, boards, governing bodies, and community
- **Report Censorship**
- Other ideas?

