

# Access & Action: Why Diverse Books Matter

March 28, 2023

# Speakers



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# Moderator



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# Speakers



**Ernestine Benedict**  
*Chief Communications Officer*  
ZERO TO THREE



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*Founder and Chief Reading Inspirer*  
Barbershop Books



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*Executive Director*  
The Learning Readers Network



**Kyle Zimmer**  
*President, CEO & Co-Founder*  
First Book



# Books Under Fire

## Diverse Books in an Era of Censorship

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March 2023



# Books Under Fire: The Rise of Book Banning in the United States

2018: 347 challenges\*

2019: 377 challenges

2020: 156 challenges\*\*

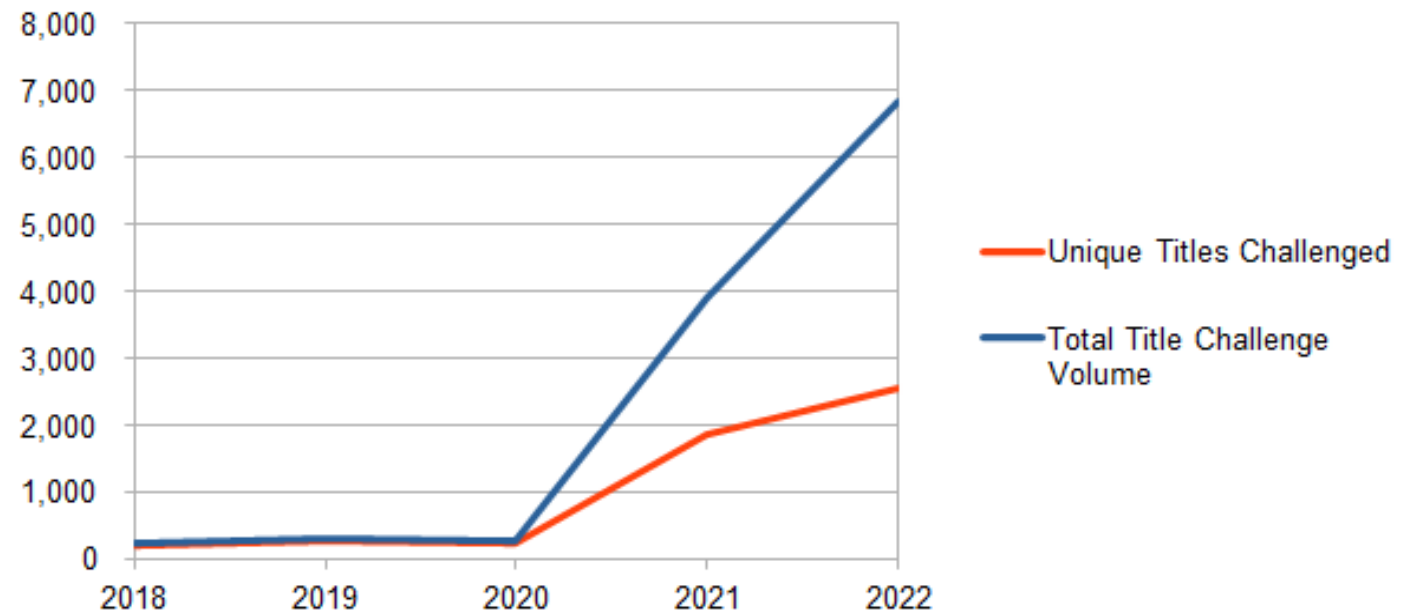
2021: 729 challenges

1597 unique titles

2022: 1272 challenges

2571 unique titles

Book and Graphic Novel Titles Challenged in the U.S., 2018-2022

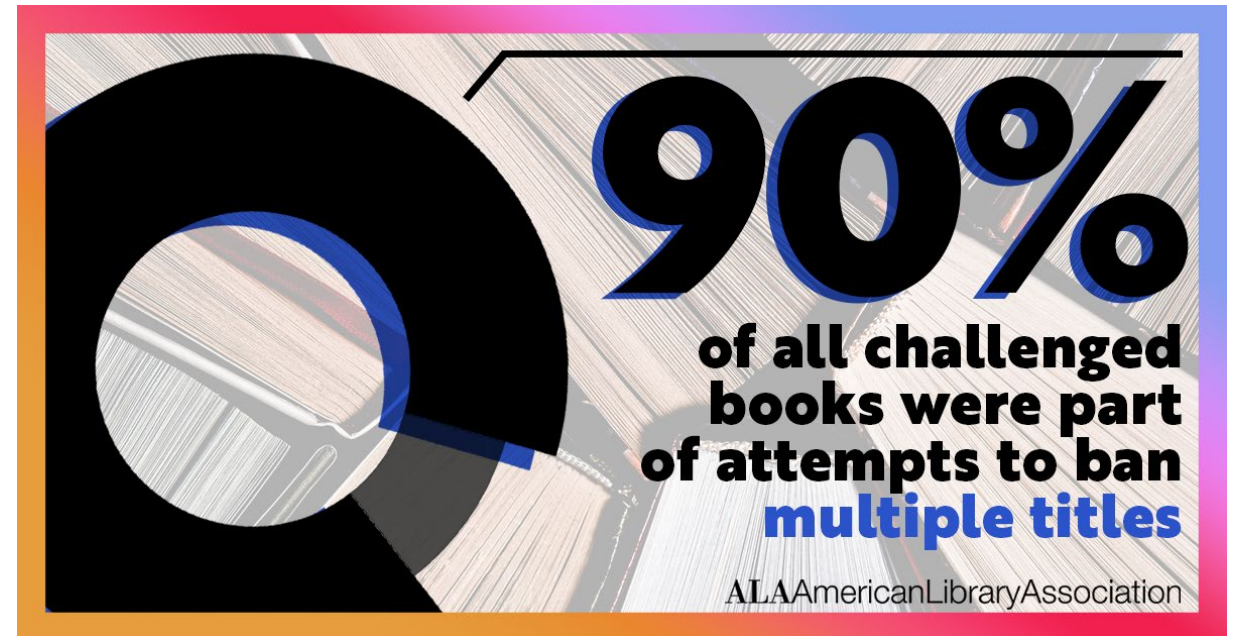


\*A challenge is a demand to remove or restrict materials in a library

\*\*Schools & Libraries closed due to pandemic

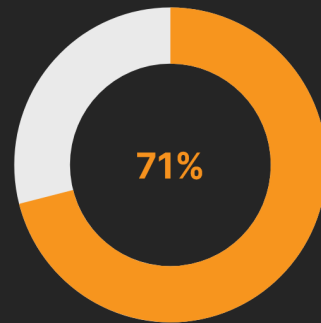
## Behind the Numbers

- Majority of challenged titles involved books addressing the lives, concerns and experiences of LGBTQIA+ persons, Black persons, Indigenous persons, or persons of color
- Organized efforts by political advocacy groups to censor entire categories of books from libraries based on subject matter or author
- Growing involvement of elected officials to use legislation to limit access to library books based on topic, genre, or viewpoint

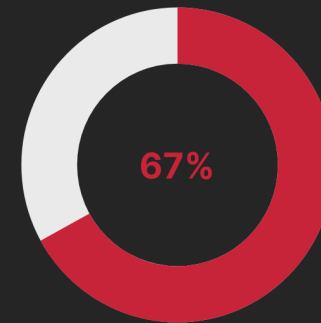


## Unite Against Book Bans is a national initiative to empower readers everywhere to stand together in the fight against censorship.

**We are not alone.** On both sides of the aisle, large majorities of voters and parents oppose book bans.



of voters oppose efforts to remove books from public libraries.



of voters oppose efforts to remove books from school libraries.

Full poll results and key findings available via the [American Library Association](#).

And yet, attempts to ban books from libraries continue to rise at an unprecedented level across the country. The American Library Association **reported 1,269 attempts** to censor library books and resources in 2022, the highest number of attempted book bans since ALA began compiling data about censorship in libraries more than 20 years ago.



Tweet



Share



Share



# Action Toolkit

A small but vocal group is driving the current flood of book bans in school and public libraries across the country. It's important to counter those voices by uniting in support of the freedom to read in your local community. How can you and your community unite against book bans? We've put together this action toolkit to help you get started.

Are you part of an organization? You can find additional resources to amplify and support the Unite Against Book Bans campaign in the [UABB Toolkit PDF](#).

- Talking Points
- Contact Decision Makers
- Contact Media
- Grassroots Organizing
- Social Media Tools
- Branded Materials



## How To Talk About Book Bans

Below are a set of talking points which should be customized to reflect your own voice. These can be tailored to talk about a specific book that is being challenged or used more generally to oppose book bans. The points can be used for writing a letter to your local school or library board, your state legislators and governor, or as the basis of your public comments given to any elected bodies. They can also be used to help you draft a letter to the editor of your local newspaper or in speaking with members of the media. All of these actions are important ways you can help have an impact on the issue of book bans.

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.

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

# The right to read isn't only on the ballot in major elections. Be prepared to vote in all elections, including for library and school board.



**REGISTER** to vote or **CONFIRM** your registration.



**KNOW** what's on your ballot.



Use the candidate questionnaire in the Unite Against Book Bans **TOOLKIT** to find out where your candidates stand.



Ask your candidate(s) to sign the **PLEDGE** to support the right to read.



**VOTE!**

*Unite Against Book Bans is an initiative of the American Library Association, a 501(c)(3) organization, and does not support or endorse candidates for political office.*



# Empowered by Reading

The Benefits of Giving Youth Access to a Wide Variety of Reading Materials

There are many important benefits of providing children and youth with a wide variety of developmentally appropriate reading materials – books which reflect their personal life experiences, as well as the experiences, stories, and histories of others in and beyond their communities. Reading books that represent a range of perspectives promotes student achievement, enhances youth wellbeing, and contributes to community cohesion. Trusted adults, including teachers, school librarians, and public librarians work to provide access to high-quality reading materials and teach youth to read

“When we provide students with texts that tug at their hearts, open their minds, or touch their souls, **we are fueling interest, which fuels engagement, which fuels learning.**” – Jenny Eisenman<sup>1</sup>

affect all other aspects of learning in school, as well as future opportunities in career and life. Research has demonstrated that access to books can outweigh the academic disadvantages of poverty. Youth read more when they can choose what they read and find what they are reading to be interesting and relevant to their lives. When they read more,

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ▶ Providing children and youth with access to a wide variety of reading materials in which they can both see themselves and experience the lives of others benefits the individual reader as well as the community.

# ALA Support for Libraries and Schools Managing Book Challenges



[ala.org/advocacy/fight-censorship](http://ala.org/advocacy/fight-censorship)



- Challenge Support for librarians and educators
  - One-on-One, confidential support for staff, trustees, and community members
  - Public statements and letters of support
  - Guidance on policies and best practices
- Merritt Humanitarian Fund / Freedom to Read Foundation
- Confidential challenge reporting and data collection
- Trend spotting and public advocacy
- Public awareness: Most Challenged Books, Banned Books Week

# Upcoming GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinars:

## GLR LEARNING TUESDAYS SPECIAL EARLY MATH+EARLY LITERACY SESSION

Get To Know MathTalk

Thursday, March 30, 3–4:30 p.m. ET/12–1:30 p.m. PT

## FUNDER-TO-FUNDER CONVERSATION

Co-sponsored by The Patterson Foundation

Digital Access & Data: How Can Funders Bridging the Digital Divide Use Data to Drive Strategy and Impact

Tuesday, April 4, 12:30-1:45 p.m. ET/9:30–10:45 a.m. PT

## GLR LEARNING TUESDAYS: LEARNING LOSS RECOVERY CHALLENGE WEBINAR

State Investments Taking High-Impact Tutoring to Scale

Tuesday, April 4, 3:00-4:30 p.m. ET/12-1:30 p.m. PT

Co-sponsored by Overdeck Family Foundation

## GLR LEARNING TUESDAYS: LEARNING LOSS RECOVERY CHALLENGE

Beyond the ESSER "Funding Cliff": Local Supports to Sustain High-Impact Tutoring

Tuesday, April 11, 3–4:30 p.m. ET/12–1:30 p.m. PT

Co-sponsored by Overdeck Family Foundation

[gradelevelreading.net](https://gradelevelreading.net) @readingby3rd #GLReading #LearningTuesdays #GLRKeepers

