

CENSORSHIP 2.0: THE LATEST TRENDS IN BOOK BANNING

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Red Wine & Blue Civics • August 25, 2026



WHAT IS A BAN?

A challenge is an attempt to remove or restrict access to materials or services based upon the objections of a person or group.

A book is banned when it is entirely removed from a collection in response to a formal or informal challenge.

Any reduction in access to library materials based on an individual or group's belief that the materials are harmful or offensive is an act of censorship.

IN 2025...

- ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) tracked **4,235 unique titles challenged**, the second highest ever documented by ALA. The highest ever documented was 4,240 unique titles in 2023.
- Of the unique titles challenged in 2025, **1,671 (39%) represent the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ people and people of color.**
- ALA documented **713 attempts to censor library materials and services**, 487 of which targeted books.

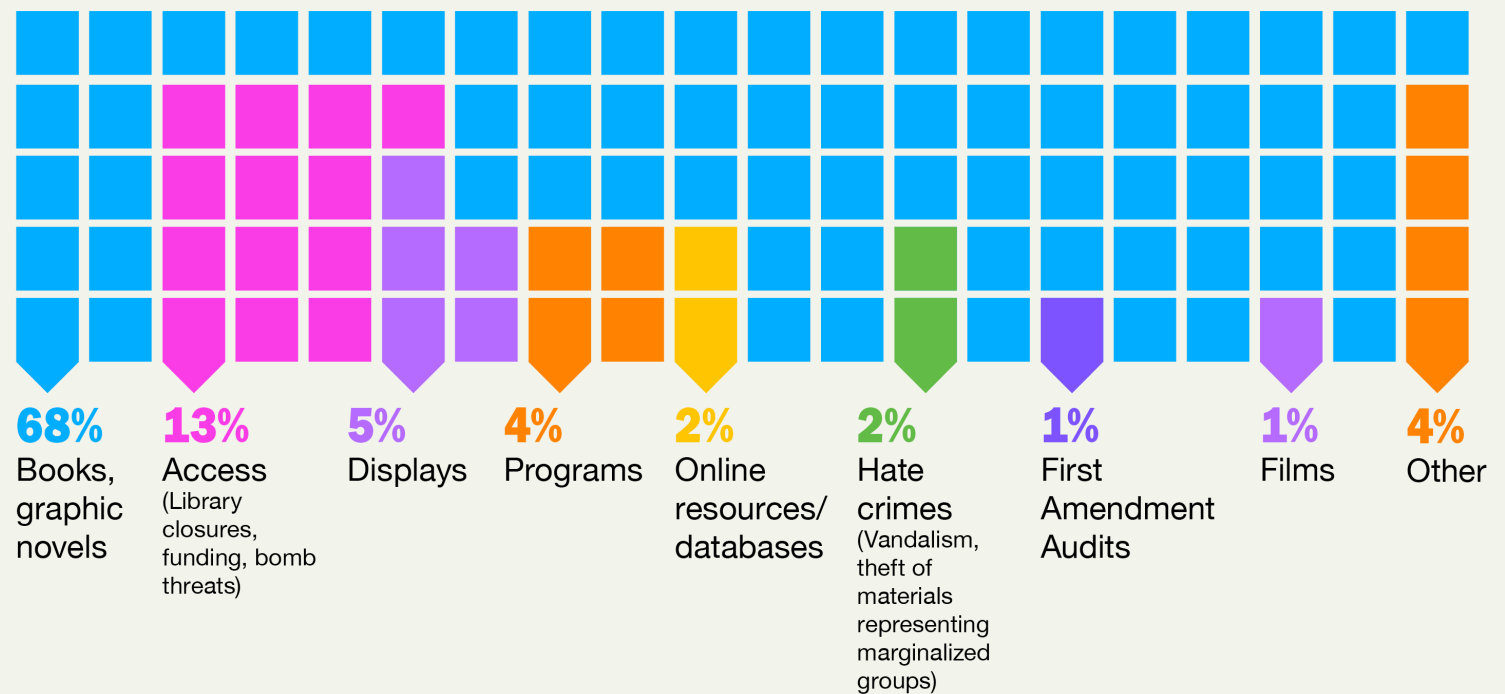
OIF documented 5,668 books banned from libraries (66% of the total challenged) in 2025. An additional 920 books were censored through access restrictions such as relocation or requiring parental permission.

This is both the highest number of titles censored in one year and the highest rate of challenges resulting in censorship from 1990–2025.

CENSORSHIP BY THE NUMBERS 2025

BOOKS AND BEYOND

ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom tracked **713 distinct censorship incidents** in 2025. Here's the breakdown.

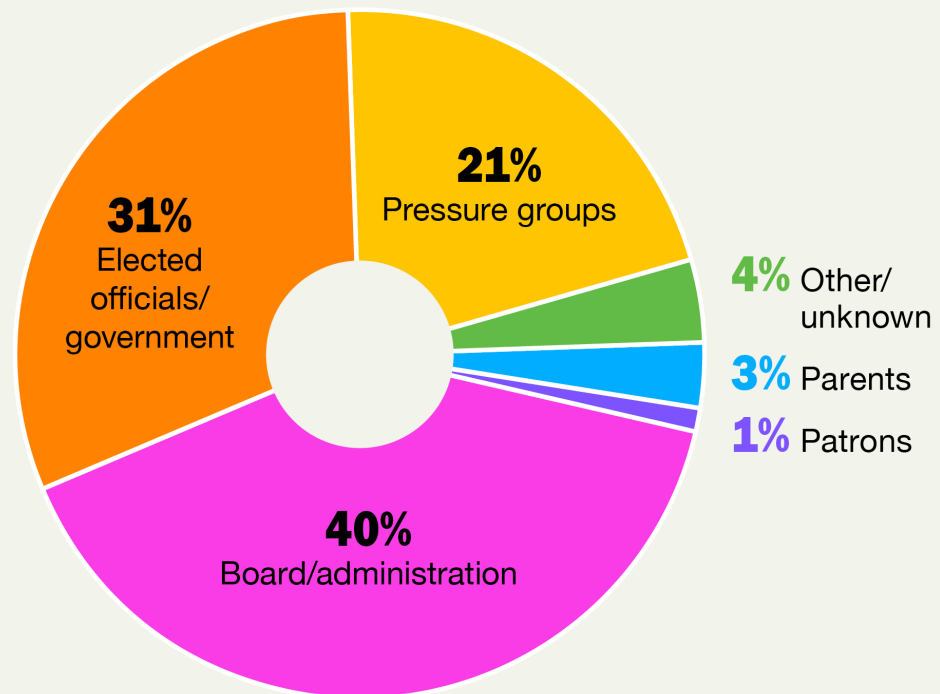


CENSORSHIP BY THE NUMBERS 2025

WHO CHALLENGES BOOKS

Nearly **92% of censorship attempts** in 2025 were initiated by pressure groups and decision makers swayed by them. This marks a 20-point increase over 2024.

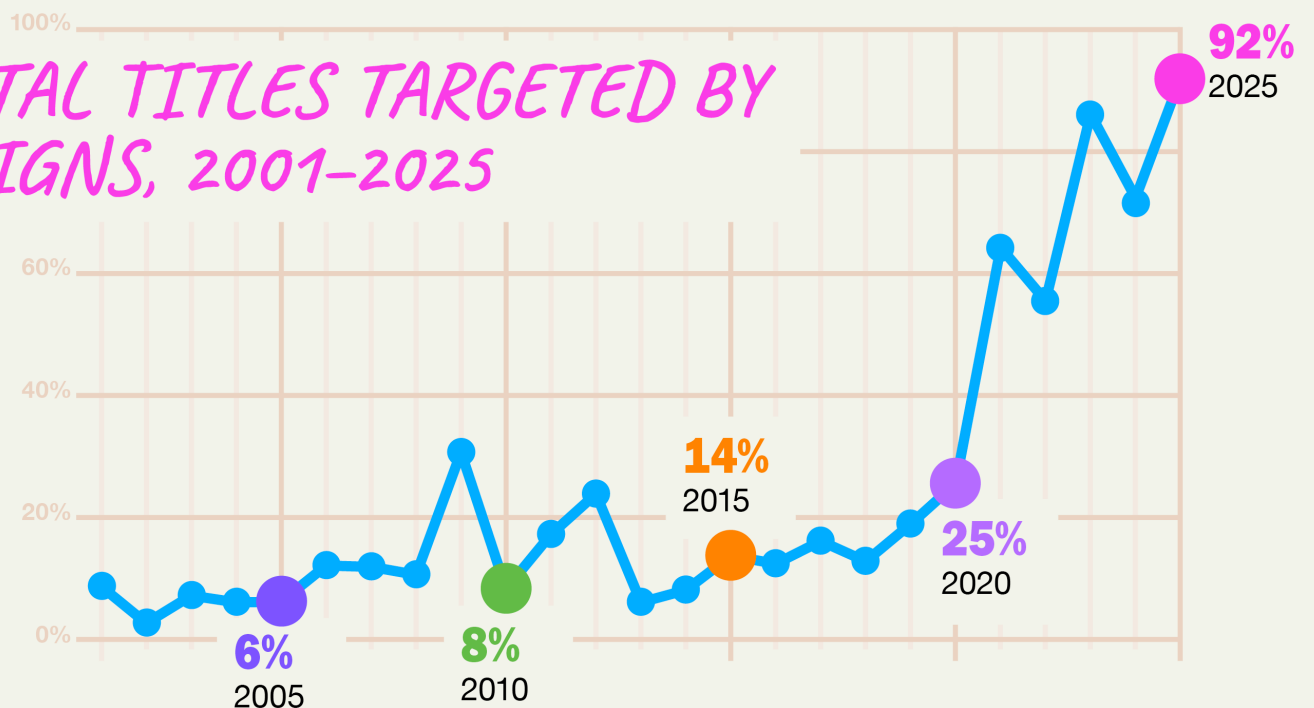
Statistics based on 8,596 total titles targeted for censorship.



CENSORSHIP BY THE NUMBERS 2025

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL TITLES TARGETED BY ORGANIZED CAMPAIGNS, 2001-2025

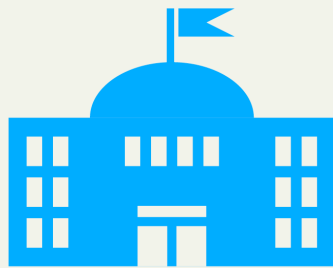
Pressure groups and the decision-makers they influenced targeted **7,884 total titles** in 2025. From 2001–2020, this constituency tried to remove an average of 46 titles per year. From 2021–2025, they targeted an average of 5,238 total titles annually.



CENSORSHIP BY THE NUMBERS 2025

WHERE CHALLENGES HAPPEN

Of the titles targeted in school library collections, 98% were in multi-title challenges. Public libraries continued to experience more overall censorship attempts than all other location types.



51%

Public libraries



37%

School libraries



8%

School curricula



3%

Higher education

Statistics based on 696 incidents with known locations and include challenges to all materials and services. About 1% of censorship attempts took place in other locations.

[ALA.ORG/BBOOKS](https://www.ala.org/bbooks)

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CENSORSHIP IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

2025

438 documented threats to intellectual freedom

184 book censorship attempts

824 total books challenged

513 books censored

92 books banned

**ANNUAL AVERAGE
2001–2020**

144 documented threats to intellectual freedom

97 book censorship attempts

102 total books challenged

7 books censored

3 books banned

<https://www.oif.ala.org/oif-releases-additional-reports-on-censorship-in-2025/>

ALA.ORG/BBOOKS

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CENSORSHIP IN SCHOOL LIBRARIES

2025

383 documented threats to intellectual freedom

279 book censorship attempts

6,886 total books challenged

97% of challenges targeted school library materials

5,897 books censored

5,245 books banned

96 books removed from curriculum

**ANNUAL AVERAGE
2001–2020**

236 documented threats to intellectual freedom

223 book censorship attempts

239 total books challenged

41% of challenges targeted school library materials

58 books censored

38 books banned

10 books removed from curriculum

<https://www.oif.ala.org/oif-releases-additional-reports-on-censorship-in-2025/>

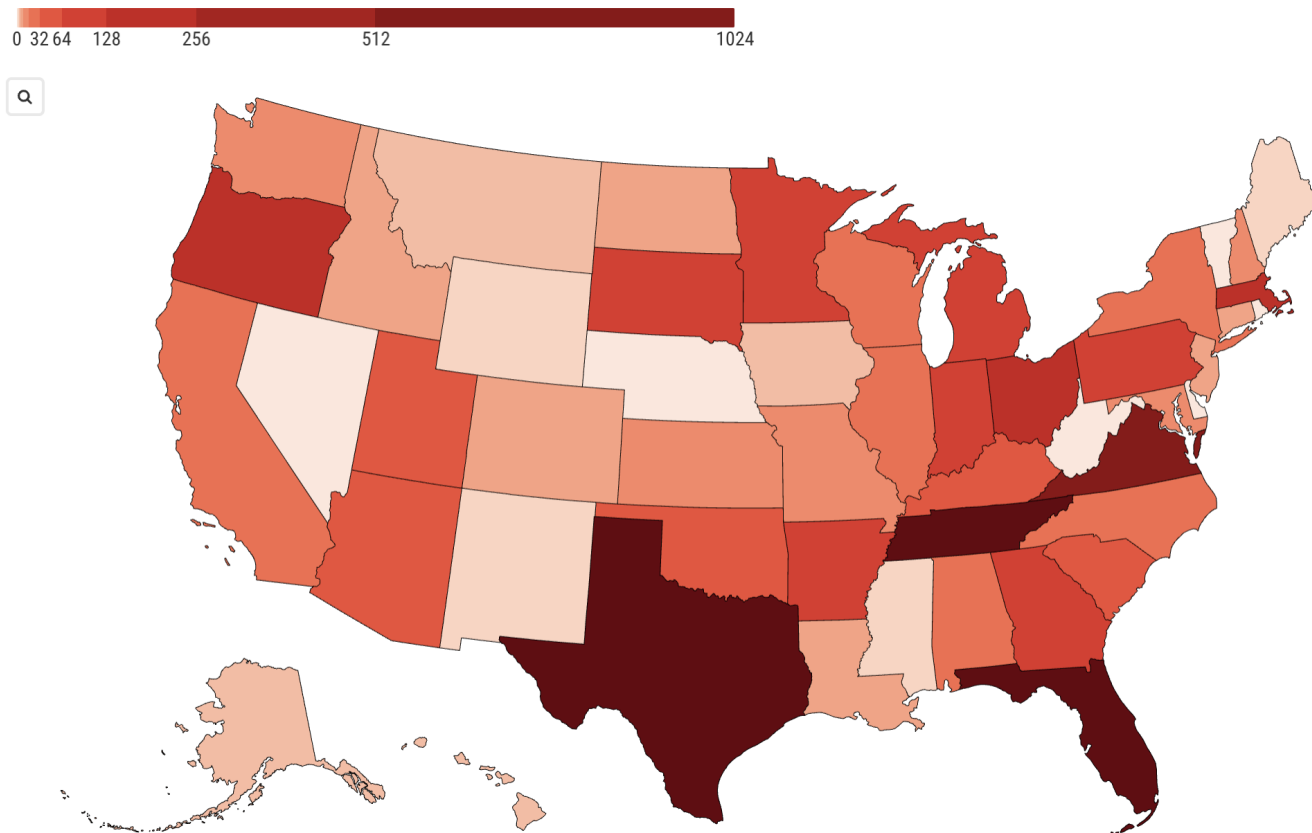
ALA.ORG/BBOOKS

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Titles Challenged in Public Schools and Libraries During 2025

Attempts to censor books during this period: 487. Total titles challenged in those attempts: 8,596 Unique titles: 4,235. Most challenged title: Sold.

In 2025, 92% of book challenges came from pressure groups and governmental decision makers. A challenge may result in access being retained, restricted, or revoked at a school or public library. In 2025, 6,588 of the titles challenged were censored (77%) and 5,668 were banned (66%). This is both the highest number of titles censored in one year and the highest rate of challenges resulting in censorship from 1990-2025.



Data compiled by: [American Library Association -- Office for Intellectual Freedom](https://www.ala.org/bbooks/book-ban-data)

<https://www.ala.org/bbooks/book-ban-data>

THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY

- ALA's Adverse Legislation and Right to Read State Legislation trackers (2026): <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/adverse-legislation-states>
- States that have passed laws that oppose book bans and/or protect the right to read:
 - California, Colorado, Connecticut*, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington

Harmful-to-Minors Laws & Library Exemptions

■ Library Exemption Exists
 ■ No Library Exemption
 ■ Partial / Ambiguous



AN ENHANCED PLAYBOOK

	<i>Then</i>	<i>Now</i>
Propaganda mechanisms	Women's & general interest magazines, radio, disinformation, word of mouth	AI, social media, television, disinformation, word of mouth
The players	Church groups, youth organizations, politicians & decision makers	Pressure groups, church groups, politicians & decision makers, influencers
Tools of censorship	Book burnings, legislation, Congressional hearings, industry self-censorship	Bans & challenges, targeted book lists, legislation, intimidation, deprofessionalization, AI

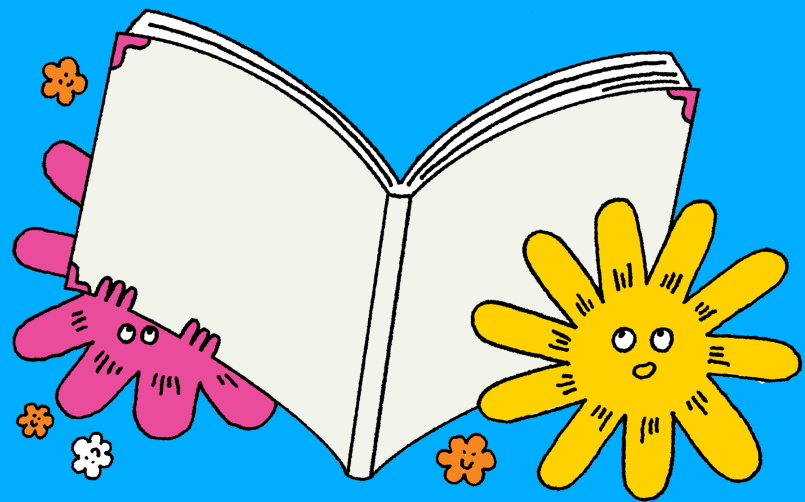
Comic Book Burnings Project: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/7deec3e3e8da4517907d266faccd2323>

ALA.ORG/BBOOKS

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WHAT YOU CAN DO TO FIGHT BOOK BANS

Every little bit counts!



COMMUNICATE

- Report censorship
 - <https://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/report>
- Share information
 - ALA.org/Bbooks
 - Spread the truth about book bans.
- Have conversations
 - Conversations that Connect:
<https://uniteagainstbookbans.org/conversations-that-connect/>
 - Look for the persuadable middle.
 - Don't confront; ask questions and find common ground.
 - Talk to your librarians, too!

ENAGAGE

- Contact decision-makers
 - Make your dissent (and support!) part of the public record.
 - Take notes.
 - Tell the Senate: Protect the Freedom to Read!
<https://www.action.ala.org/campaign/S4925/>
 - The House Must Support the Freedom to Read
<https://action.ala.org/campaign/hr7661-Apr26/>
- Vote in **all** elections.
 - Down ballot elections are more mutable than national elections.
 - Reader. Voter. Ready. <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/initiatives/reader-voter-ready>
 - <https://uniteagainstbookbans.org/vote/>

ORGANIZE

- Contribute time & resources
 - Volunteer at the library to find out about the issues firsthand.
 - Join the library board, library trustees, or friends of the library group.
 - United for Libraries: <https://www.ala.org/united>
 - Volunteer for challenge review committees.
 - Attend local governance and board meetings and speak up or support those who do.
 - Build coalitions prepared to support your local libraries.
 - When able, provide financial support to the organizations doing the work.

RESOURCES



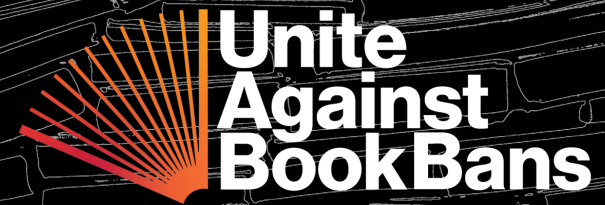
UNITE AGAINST BOOK BANS

- [UniteAgainstBookBans.org](https://uniteagainstbookbans.org)
- Conversations that Connect:
<https://uniteagainstbookbans.org/conversations-that-connect/>
- Action Toolkit:
uniteagainstbookbans.org/toolkit/
- Voter resources:
uniteagainstbookbans.org/vote/



BOOK RÉSUMÉS

- Book résumés help teachers, librarians, parents, and community members defend books from censorship.
- They detail each title's significance and educational value and are easy to share with administrators, book review committees, elected officials, and board members.
- Cataloging Z-targets available for integration with your library's catalog
- bit.ly/BookResumes



bit.ly/BookResumes

LIBRARIES & IF

- The Freedom to Read Statement:
<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>
- The Library Bill of Rights:
<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/>
- Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights:
<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations>
- 11th Edition of the Intellectual Freedom Manual:
<https://alastore.ala.org/ifm11>
- United for Libraries Public Library Trustees Ethics Statement:
<https://www.ala.org/sites/default/files/united/content/trustees/orgtools/Ethics%20Statement.pdf>
- How to Respond to Challenges and Concerns about Library Resources:
<https://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/respond>

UNDERSTANDING CENSORSHIP

- Data and more: [ALA.org/Bbooks](https://www.ala.org/bbooks)
- Censorship Search Portal: <https://www.ala.org/bbooks/censorship-search-portal>
- Lies About Libraries: <https://www.oif.ala.org/tag/lies-about-libraries/>
- Take Back the Right to Read: <https://www.oif.ala.org/take-back-the-right-to-read/>
- Public and school library reportd: <https://www.oif.ala.org/oif-releases-additional-reports-on-censorship-in-2025/>
- Information about legal issues and recent court decisions: <https://www.oif.ala.org/tag/oif-one-sheets/>
- The Book Report 2025: <https://alastore.ala.org/book-report-titles-targeted-censorship-2025-file>
 - Previous years (scroll down): <https://www.ala.org/bbooks/frequentlychallengedbooks/top10>

OPPOSING CENSORSHIP

- Book Ban Busters: <https://redwine.blue/bbb/>
- Resources from Unite Against Book Bans partners: <https://uniteagainstbookbans.org/partner-resources/>
- Voters Oppose Book Bans in Libraries: <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/voters-oppose-book-bans-libraries>
- Show Up for Our Libraries: <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/show-up-for-our-libraries>
- Banned Books, Banned Beliefs: <https://uniteagainstbookbans.org/banned-books-banned-beliefs/>

ALA OFFICE FOR INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

Report Censorship



Challenge Support



Contact

oif@ala.org

800-545-2433

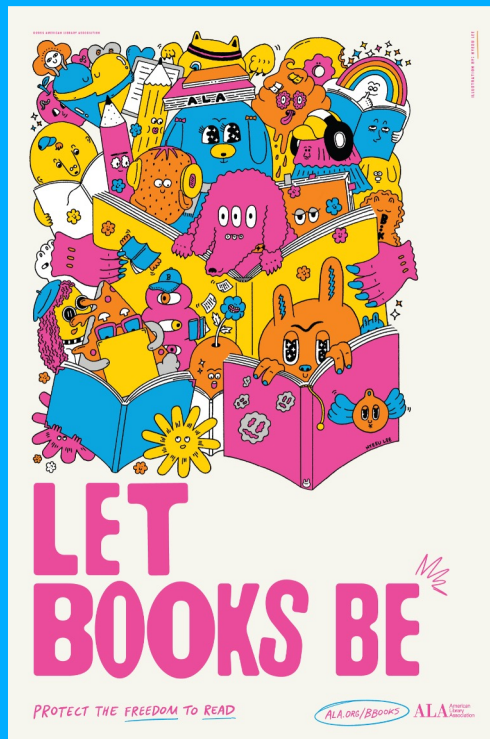
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THANK YOU!

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ala.org/letbooksbe/
www.librarygiftshop.org/let-books-be

ala.org/Bbooks

Additional resources:
BannedBooksWeek.org

BANNED BOOKS WEEK®

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