

*“Let Freedom Read!” : The Unprecedented Book Banning Movement and Why We Need to Get Involved

Community Impact of The Book Banning Movement in Washington and Nationally

December 6, 2023

5:30 to 7:30pm

* The American Library Association theme for 2023 Book Banning Week in honor of record-breaking efforts to censor books now sweeping the nation’s libraries and schools



Panel discussion will be recorded

Agenda

- Welcome by AAUW-WA Online Branch President, Kelvie Comer and Land Acknowledgement (3 minutes)
- AAUW WA Online Program Lead, Melissa Johnsen - Introduces Facilitator , Dorothy McBride (1 min)
- AAUW WA Online Dorothy McBride, Facilitator- Our Program Objective: Why we need to understand the Educational Reform and Book Banning Movement in the US and Washington State (10 min)
- Facilitator welcomes and introduces panelists ; Panelist Perspectives (1 min intro; 5 minutes each @ 15 minutes total)
- Facilitated Q&A (25 minutes)
- Facilitator - Audience Q&A (20 minutes)
- AAUW WA Online Branch Program Lead and Panelists - Call to Action (10 minutes)
- Closing and thank you by AAUW-WA Online Branch President (1 minutes)

Panel discussion will be recorded.

Melissa Johnsen

Welcome: AAUW Washington State Online President

- **Kelvie C. Comer, Ed.D.**
 - AAUW-Washington State Online Branch President
 - Bio in Appendix



AAUW Vision & Mission & Values

- **AAUW VISION**

- Equity for all.

- **AAUW MISSION**

- To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

- **AAUW VALUES**

- Nonpartisan. Fact-based. Principled. Inclusive and Intersectional.

Land Acknowledgement

AAUW Washington State Online Branch wishes to acknowledge that our branch spans the ancestral lands and traditional waters of many indigenous peoples. We honor their indigenous cultures, histories, identities, and current realities

Disclaimer

- AAUW is a non-partisan organization; that means that we don't support one or another political party.
- AAUW supports policy not political parties or candidates.
- As we learn about the movements for Educational Reform and Banning Books, we may refer to political parties or politicians in the discussion

**Dorothy McBride – Facilitator
AAUW WA Online – Public Policy Committee, Member; WA State
Public Policy Committee**

Agenda: 1 mins

Dorothy McBride

BIO in our Appendix



Panel Objectives: Book Bans & Education Reform – Community Impact

Dorothy McBride

Panel Objectives: Book Bans & Education Reform – Community Impact

Agenda: 10 mins

US History of Book Banning

- **2022: American Library Association (ALA)** reported a record-breaking number of attempts to ban books in 2022—up 38 % from the previous year, which totals 1,586 book bans in 86 school districts across 26 states.
- In 2022 Texas had 713 bans - nearly double that of other states.

Reference:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/history-of-book-bans-in-the-united-states>

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/10/a-short-history-of-book-banning/>

[Banned in the USA: Rising School Book Bans Threaten Free Expression and Students' First Amendment Rights \(April 2022\) - PEN America](#)

Dorothy McBride

Panel Objectives: Book Bans & Education Reform – Community Impact, continued...

US History of Book Banning

- **2023:** Between January 1 and August 31, 2023, ALA reported **695 attempts to censor library materials and services and documented challenges to 1,915 unique titles** - a 20% increase from the same reporting period in 2022, which saw the highest number of book challenges since ALA began compiling the data more than 20 years ago.

Panel Objectives: Book Bans & Education Reform – Community Impact, continued...

US History of Book Banning

- Of the challenges, ALA, [the organization notes](#), "the vast majority were written by or about members of the **LGBTQIA+ community and people of color.**"
- Back in 1982, so many books were being challenged in the US that several organizations came together to start [Banned Books Week](#), both to highlight the fact that literature was being banned, and to celebrate the freedom to read.

Dorothy McBride

Panel Objectives: Book Bans & Education Reform – Community Impact, continued...

US History of Book Banning

- While modern day US book censorship was raising in 1982, banning Books in the US dates to Colonial times.

Timeline – History of US Book Banning

1650

- Massachusetts Bay colonist William Pynchon published The Meritorious Price of Our Redemption that was banned. Only 2 copies exist today.

1850

Multiple states outlawed books expressing anti-slavery sentiments - Uncle Tom's Cabin

1873

- Comstock Act - Made it illegal to possess "obscene" or "immoral" texts or articles or send them through the mail.
- New England Watch and Ward Society spearheaded banning of books

1870-1960 - Jim Crow-era South

- The United Daughters of the Confederacy banned school textbooks not sympathetic of South's Civil War loss
- 1950s challenges against books
McCarthy-era censors felt encouraged communism and socialism

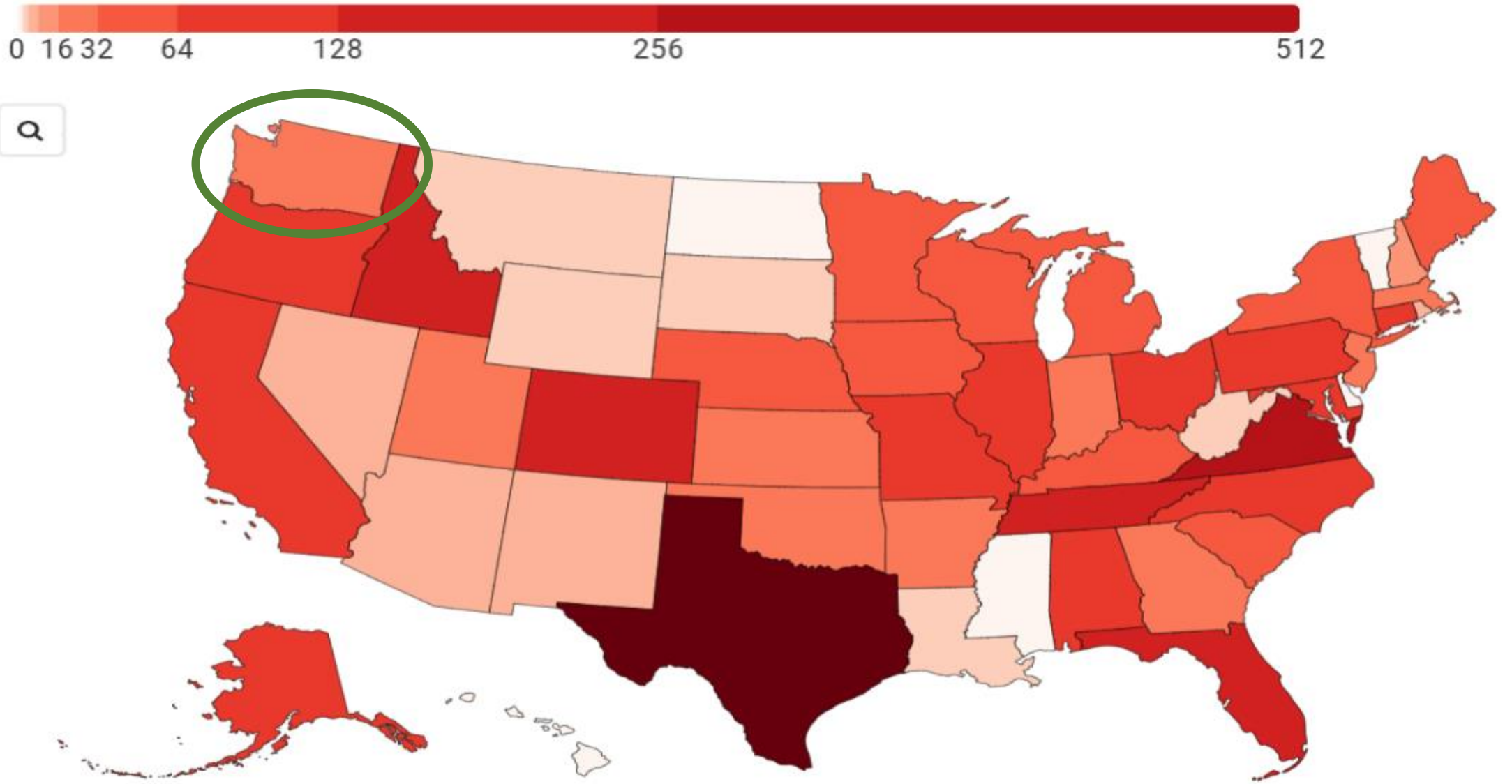
1969

- Supreme Court weighed in on students' right to free expression. In Tinker v. Des Moines

1982

- Supreme Court with Pico v Island Trees Board of Education overtly addressed schoolbooks in a case involving a group of students who sued .
- Book Ban Week due to rise of book Bans

Timeline – History of US Book Banning- 2020 to Date



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

PEN America recorded instances of book bans and individual titles banned over the past two years

since PEN America started tracking from July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2023



Instances of book banning,
2022 - 2023

3,362

Instances of book banning,
2021 - 2022

2,532

Unique titles banned,
2022 - 2023

1,557

Unique titles banned,
2021 - 2022

1,643

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



33 bans



Tricks



The Bluest Eye



Looking for Alaska



A Court of Mist and Fury



Gender Queer: A Memoir



The Perks of Being a Wallflower



Thirteen Reasons Why



Sold



Crank



Identical



Empire of Storms

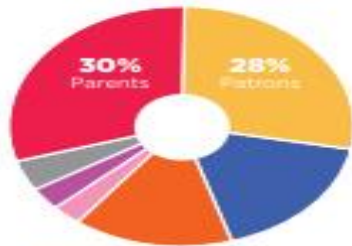
Timeline – History of US Book Banning – 2020 to Date

CENSORSHIP BY THE NUMBERS

In 2022, the American Library Association tracked the highest number of attempted book bans since ALA began compiling data about censorship in libraries more than 20 years ago; 2,571 unique titles were challenged last year, up from 1,858 in 2021. [Learn more at ala.org/bbooks](https://www.ala.org/bbooks)



WHO INITIATES CHALLENGES?



Statistics based on 1,207 cases with known initiators.

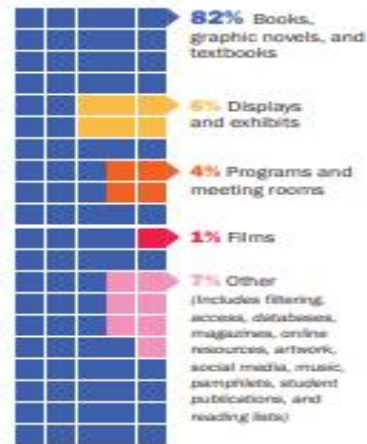
WHERE DO CHALLENGES TAKE PLACE?



Statistics based on 1,264 cases with known locations.

BOOKS AND BEYOND

ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom tracked **1,269 challenges** in 2022. Here's the breakdown:



CENSORSHIP ON THE RISE

The unparalleled number of reported book challenges in 2022 nearly doubled the number reported in 2021. The number of unique titles targeted marked a 38% increase over 2021.

NUMBER OF UNIQUE TITLES CHALLENGED BY YEAR



CENSORSHIP STATISTICS COMPILED BY:



OFFICE FOR
Intellectual Freedom
American Library Association

Outright censorship is only one face of book bans.

- Shelving books in inaccessible places,
- Defacing them,
- Marking them with reading levels that put them out of students' reach also keep books out of would-be readers' hands,

Challenges of any kind can create a chilling effect for librarians.

Reference: ALA First Amendment advocate [Pat Scales](#),

Dorothy McBride

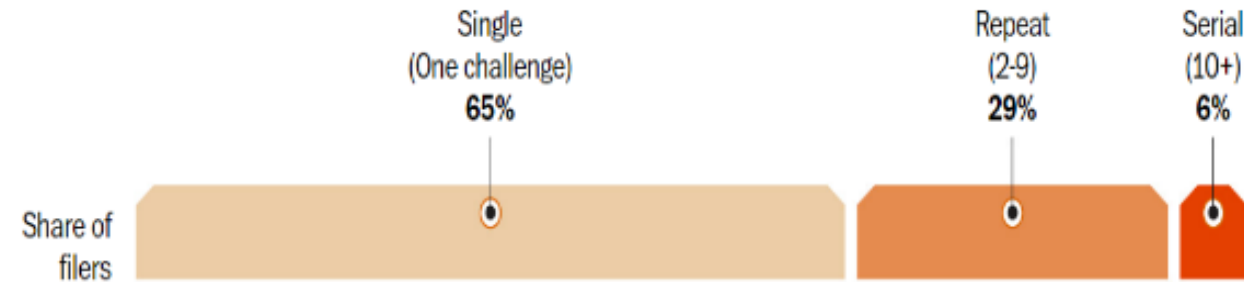
Timeline – History of US Book Banning – 2020 to Date

- As in 1982 with a rise of the book banning, there has been a rise in book banning since the Pandemic in 2020 to date.
- Efforts include:
 - Challenging of books & Book banning
 - Curriculum reform
 - Election of school board members advocating for these changes.

A small number of people file a disproportionate number of book challenges

60% of challenges came from individuals who challenged at least 10 books.

Most filers only made a single challenge ...



... but most challenges came from serial filers



Note: Percentages are rounded and may not add up to 100.
Source: Washington Post analysis of school district records.

The Politicization of Education and Books

Dorothy McBride

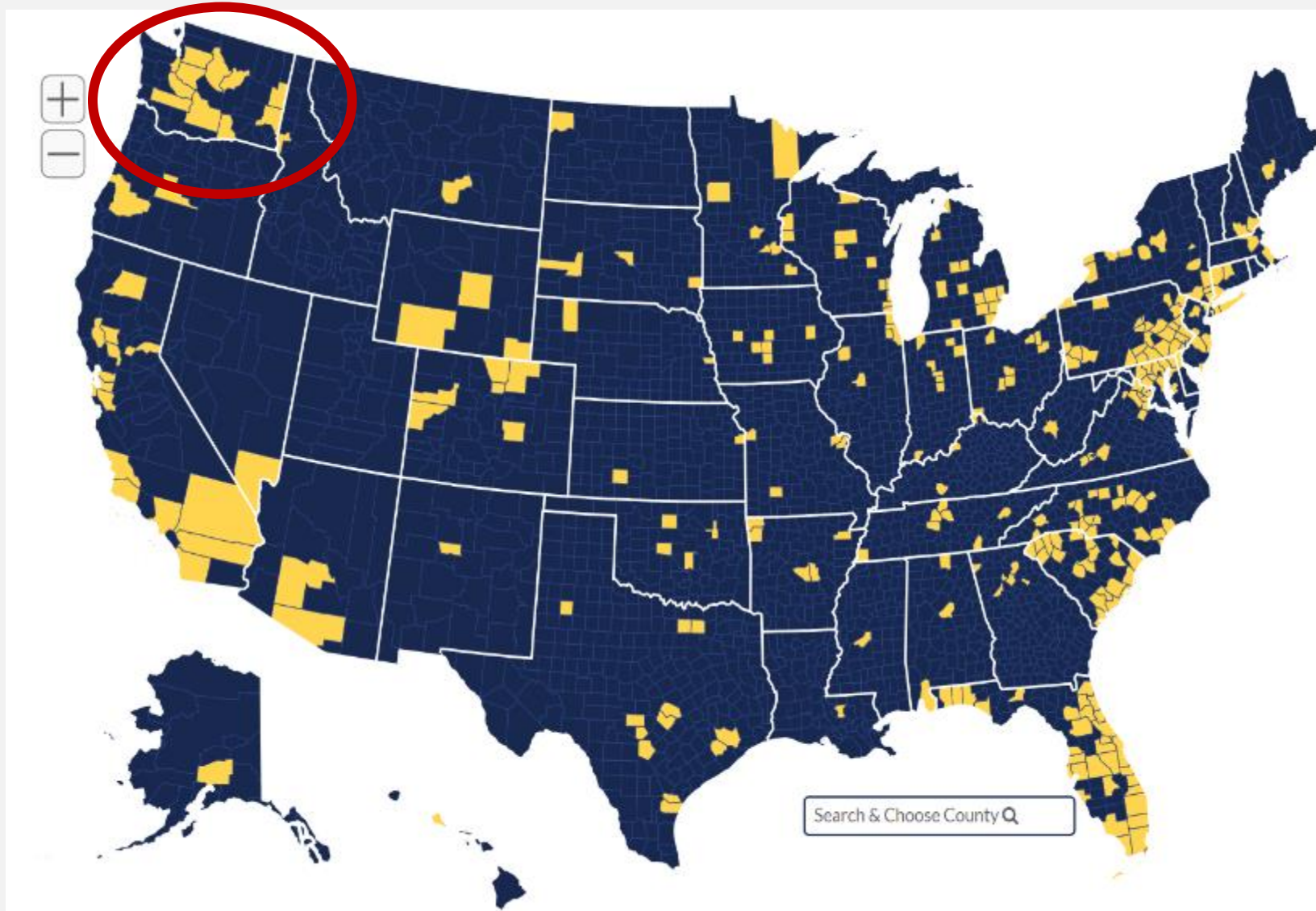
The Politicization of Education and Books

- Outside “grassroots” organizations are partnering with organizations like the [Leadership Institute](#), Founded in 1979, by conservative activist [Morton Blackwell](#).
 - Teaches conservatives the nuts and bolts of how to succeed in the public policy process.
- Institute has graduated 160K individuals.
 - Examples of Graduates
 - [Grover Norquist](#),
 - [Ralph Reed](#),
 - Senator [Mitch McConnell](#),
 - Vice-President [Mike Pence](#), [James O’Keefe](#),
 - new members of the 113th Congress,
 - and elected officials in all 50 states. ^[6]

“Grassroot “Organizations of Interest

- [Moms for Liberty](#), founded in 2021, in FL began by campaigning against [COVID-19 protections in schools](#), including [mask](#) and [vaccine mandates](#).
- [Parents Defending Education](#), was founded in 2021. It opposes the teaching of critical race theory and related left-progressive ideology in K-12 public schools
 - NOTE: Both Organizations Identified as a Extremist Groups by the Southern Poverty Law Center. <https://www.npr.org/2023/06/07/1180486760/splc-moms-for-liberty-extremist-group> The SPLC report compares Moms for Liberty and similar organizations of today to pro-segregationist parent groups that flourished in the wake of the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*.
- [1776 Project PAC](#) of the **1776 Project** established in September 2020 by President Trump.

Moms for Liberty - US Chapters



As of their first national gathering in Tampa, Florida, on July 14–17, 2022, **Moms for Liberty** said they had 195 chapters in 37 states and nearly 100,000 members.

In June 2023, it said that it had 245 chapters in 45 states and a membership of more than 115,000.

Reference:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moms_for_Liberty#:~:text=As%20of%20their%20first%20national,me mbership%20of%20more%20than%20115%2C000

Parents Defending Education

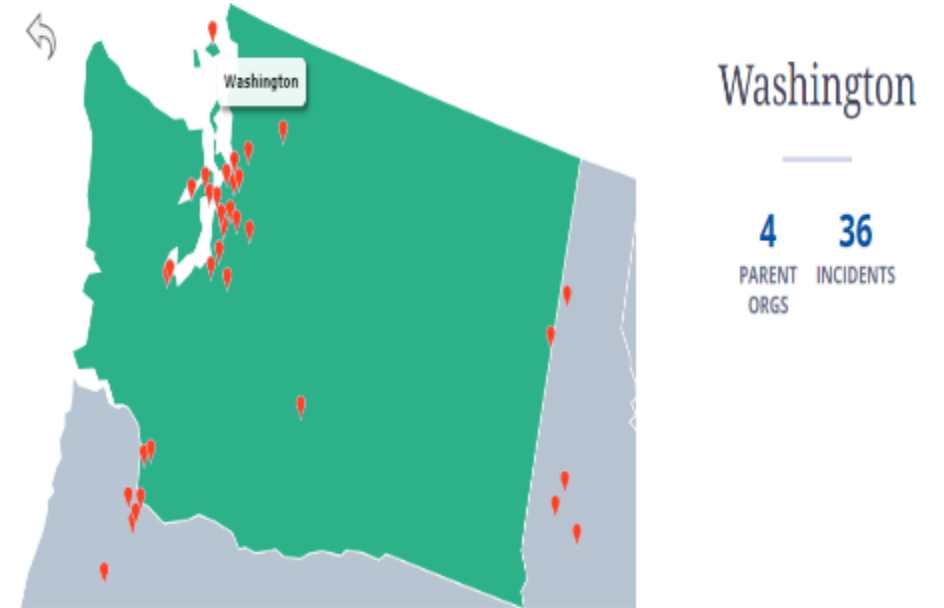
- **Parents Defending Education (PDE)** is a right-leaning organization that opposes the teaching of critical race theory and related left-progressive ideology in K-12 public schools. ¹
- Founded in 2021, the group has filed racism complaints with the U.S. [Department of Education](#) against several school districts that have supposedly admitted to engaged in “systemic racism.”
- **Southern Poverty Law Center** has added several parents' groups to their list including [Parents Defending Education](#) along with 1,225 local and national organizations that the nonprofit deems to be "antigovernment extremist groups" promoting "hate."

Reference: https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Parents_Defending_Education
<https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/parents-defending-education/>

THESE ARE PROBLEMS EVERYWHERE... BUT THERE ARE ALSO PEOPLE FIGHTING BACK.

Indoctrination Map

Parents Defending Education – The Organization’s Perspective



This map identifies parent organizations for informational purposes only. A listing does not necessarily imply PDE's affiliation or agreement. PDE reviews information as it is received, investigating each incident and evaluating and verifying facts before we publish.

Reference: <https://defendinged.org/map/?state-filter=wa&district-filter=&types-filter=parent-organizations&issues-filter=&public-private-filter=public,private>


The Politicization of Education and Books , continued...

- Once candidates win these offices, they begin to use their position to
 - Ban books
 - Fire teachers and administrators
 - End diversity and equity programs
 - Make schools dangerous for LGBTQ+ kids
 - Reject curriculums that reckon with America's history
 - Even a library system can officially break ties with the American Library Association,
 - “Rebranding” banning a Book to calling it ‘*removing books*’

The Politicization of Education and Books , continued...

- These school board efforts are being seen across the country.
- Educational reform and book ban proponent candidates run and win in places as varied as
 - Miami
 - Newtown, CT
 - Suburban Chicago
 - Colorado
 - Washington
 - California

Dorothy McBride

VOTE  **Walla Walla School Board Candidates 2023**

IF YOU DO NOT WANT pornography, grooming, and low academic proficiency in Walla Walla Public Schools, there are three positions open on a 5-person school board, and we are the three to make that change.

WE BELIEVE IN:

- Being a voice for parents and the community and to assist our parents in understanding their rights and choices, especially in the areas of sex and gender education
- To provide parents and the community a voice for concerns when confronting fringe ideologies that are being embraced and promoted by our district through classroom curriculum
- Teaching core subjects and focusing on academic rigor, instead of identity politics
- Supporting both preparation for higher education and the trades

CHRIS LEYENDECKER
School Board Position 3

DR. ZANA CARVER
School Board Position 4

KIRK JAMESON
School Board Position 5

Paid for by the Campaign to Elect Chris Leyendecker | Campaign to Elect Dr. Carver | Campaign to Elect Kirk Jameson

The Politicization of Education and Books , continued...

- 2023 National Election Update - From **RUN FOR SOMETHING**: <https://runforsomething.net/>

... “nearly two-thirds of **Run for Something (RFS) school board candidates**’ won, including every single one of [RFS] candidates who was up against someone endorsed by Moms for Liberty.”

From an article aptly titled [“How to keep wingnuts off school boards:”](#)

*A typical race might look like the one in Henrico County, Virginia, in which high school teacher Madison Irving, [endorsed](#) by **Run for Something** and the Campaign for Our Shared Future, was vying for a seat against Eleina Espigh, who has described herself as “anti-mask, anti-vax, anti-abortion ... the school board’s worst enemy.” Irving defeated Espigh on Tuesday: 10,108 votes to 7,484.*

One schoolteacher who voted for Irving told the Henrico Citizen that she had canvassed for him too, in part because “I don’t think that [Irving] stands for any type of banning of books. He wants all children to be represented.” Another voter said he cast a vote for Irving largely because “Republicans suck.”

This race, like others that played out this week, illustrates a broader principle. These campaigns don’t have to be complicated in order to prevail; when the Republican-based candidates are so openly unhinged, their opposition need only not be.

- **HOWEVER** - ...it’ll be even more important to dig in on, because, [again from the WSJ](#):

*“Undeterred by Tuesday’s setbacks, **Moms for Liberty will increase training for school board candidates moving forward and try to rally more donors to support them. “We’re just getting started,” [MFL founder Tiffany] Justice said.**”*

- One of our Panelist, Gavin Downing, Ran for the Kent School Board.
 - His opponent had Moms for Liberty policy beliefs ran successfully by ensuring their policy beliefs were not conveyed publicly aligned with Mother’s for Liberty.

The 2023 Election Update Reinforces :

- **The need to KNOW your School Board Candidates are - What are their policies stances?**
- **School Board Elections IMPACT your School Districts and Libraries - VOTING is CRITICAL**

Our Panelists: Introductions and Perspectives

Welcome Panelists: Introduction & Perspectives

Kimberly Cassetto

- Walla Walla High School
- Library Media Specialist



Gavin Downing

- Kentridge High School
- Teacher - Librarian



Ava Kirtley

- Former Student, Walla Walla High School
- Currently University Student



Panelists Perspectives: Book Banning and Impact on our Communities

Gavin Downing

- Kentridge High School
- Teacher - Librarian

Kimberly Cassetto

- Walla Walla High School
- Library Media Specialist

Ava Kirtley

- Former Student, Walla Walla High School
- Currently University Student

Panelists (5 mins per Panelist)

Panelists: Questions & Answers – a Discussion

AAUW Facilitator Dorothy McBride: Facilitated Q&A and Discussion with the Panelists

Agenda: 25 mins

- Questions & Discussion with our Panelists

Stop Sharing Slide

Dorothy McBride

AAUW Facilitator Dorothy McBride: Facilitated Attendee Questions

Agenda: 20 mins

Please submit your questions via **CHAT**



Via the Zoom chat window – Send to EVERYONE

Dorothy McBride
Stop Sharing Slide

Call to Action: Book Bans and Educational Reform

Learn

Advocate

Act

Agenda: 10 mins

Call to Action: Book Bans and Educational Reform

1

Learn

- Read about the history of book banning at the American Association of Libraries (ALA) site <https://www.ala.org/>
- Engage with ALA's **Annual Banned Books Week**, and review the ALA Report on 2023 Book Challenges

<https://www.ala.org/>



- **Banned Books Week** was launched in 1982 in response to a sudden surge in the number of challenges to books in schools, bookstores and libraries.

Call to Action: Book Bans and Educational Reform

1

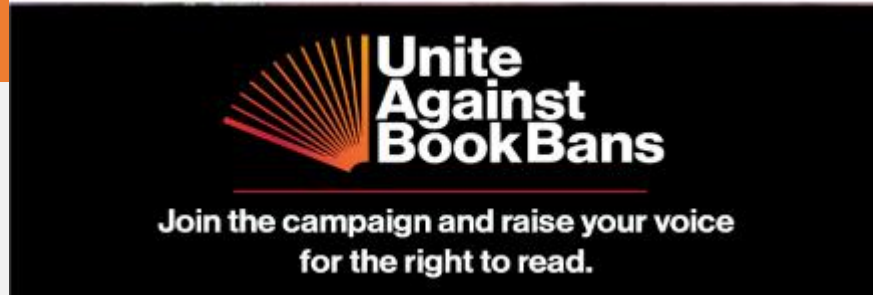
Learn

- The **Fiery History of Banned Books** (Feat. Princess Weekes) | It's Lit
 - A Fun 15-minute YouTube distilling down the history of Book Banning worldwide <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xpKqRC-9Avc&t=155s>
- Go to **PEN America** - a national leader in fighting educational censorship in both higher ed and K-12.
 - Signature campaign against [educational gag orders](https://pen.org/issue/educational-censorship/) — legislative restrictions on the freedom to learn and teach that have swept the country since January 2021. <https://pen.org/issue/educational-censorship/>
- Visit your Local Library!

Call to Action: Book Bans and Educational Reform, continued...

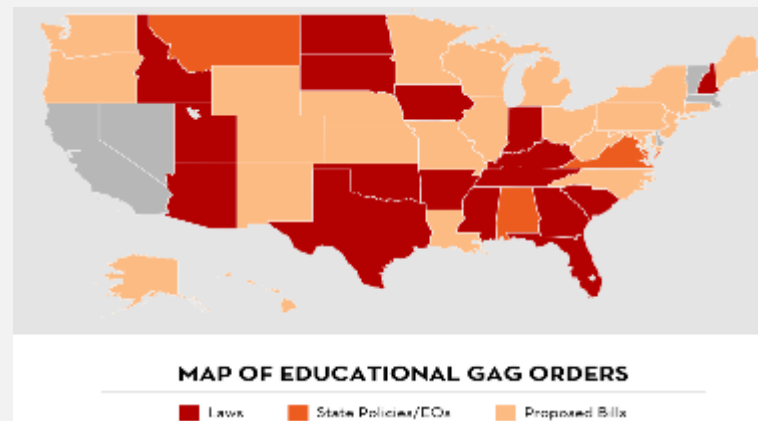
2

Advocate



<https://uniteagainstbookbans.org/take-action/>

- Get involved in advocating against book challenges and banning – understand the legislative landscape. <https://pen.org/issue/educational-censorship/>



Call to Action: Book Bans and Educational Reform, continued...

2

Advocate

- Visit **the Washington Library Association** to learn more about this movement and how to advocate against Book bans <https://www.wla.org/ifs-resources>
- Explore **EveryLibrary**. The first and only national organization dedicated to building voter support for libraries.
 - Join the fight for the First Amendment and help fight against book bans. They will connect you to help and tools every step of the way. Get started today!
<https://www.everylibrary.org/>

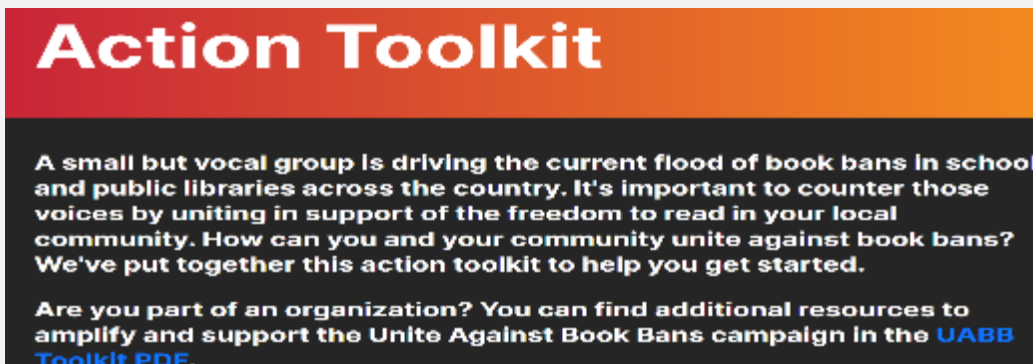
Call to Action: Book Bans and Educational Reform, continued...

3 Act

- Report Censorship at **American Library Association (ALA)**
 - <https://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/report>



- Download the Unite against Book Bans Toolkit
 - <https://uniteagainstbookbans.org/toolkit/>



Call to Action: Book Bans and Educational Reform, continued...

3

Act



- Visit the **GLAAD** organization site and download their guide for community response & action
 - <https://glaad.org/publications/book-bans-a-guide-for-community-response-and-action/>
- Follow your **Local School board**. Attend Meetings. Ask Questions. Volunteer in Elections.
- **VOTE – ALL elections.**
 - School Board, City Council, County Commission & Council, State Representatives and Federal Representatives. School Board, City Council, County Commission & Council are non-partisan - **Know who your candidates are – what they stand for.**

Thank you for joining us!

Agenda: 1 mins

- Our Attendees
- Our Panelists
- If you would like a Recording of the Panel, please contact AAUW WA Online.
Johnsen.Melissa@gmail.com
- A PDF of the presentation will be posted on our Website. <https://wa-online.aauw.net/>

Thank you!

Panel discussion will be recorded.

APPENDIX

Panelist – Detailed Bio: Kimberly Cassetto

Kim Cassetto (she/her) is the library media specialist at Walla Walla High School, which combines her passion for reading and student advocacy.

Kim has a B.A. in English Literature from the University of Washington, an M.Ed from Eastern Washington University, and a school library media endorsement from Seattle Pacific University.

She taught high school English for eight years before serving as a Student Services administrator at Walla Walla Community College prior to returning to Walla Walla High School as a teacher librarian.



In the fall of 2021, Kim started receiving inquiries from community members about book titles they had seen on the news in Fairfax, VA. Within weeks, a small but strident group began challenging library book titles by LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC authors on social media videos and in school board meetings.

The public objections then grew into formal challenges. These public outcries for removal of books, Kim's dismissal, and board meeting spectacles lasted for 15 months. Kim credits her rapport with students, colleagues, and her community in coordination with her work with her superintendent and district administration to develop thorough school board policy and procedure on collection development for successfully overturning book challenges.

Kim was recently awarded her local Chamber of Commerce 2023 **Educator of the Year award**, a **district Staff Achievement Award**, and recognition from **WA Secretary of State Steve Hobbs**. When she's not advocating for intellectual freedom, Kim enjoys traveling with her two teenagers and her husband, reading a healthy mix of YA and adult literature, and catching up with friends.

Panelist – Detailed Bio: Gavin Downing



Gavin is a Teacher - Librarian at Kentridge High School.

Gavin received his BA in Education from City University in 2006 and went on to teach. Gavin then returned to obtain his Masters in Education in 2011 with a focus on Library Media from Antioch University.

Gavin started with Kent School District as a teacher-librarian in 2018, first at Cedar Heights Middle School, and now at Kentridge High School

As a school librarian, he was the proud recipient of the **Candace Morgan Intellectual Freedom award** in 2022 for his fight against book bans.

For his work in equity in education, he won the **Student Involvement Award** from Washington Education Association in 2023.

Gavin currently serves as the vice-chair for Washington Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Section. Gavin also ran for the Kent School Board in Nov 2023. <https://www.electgavin.com/>

Panelist – Detailed Bio: Ava Kirtley

- Ava is a former Student at Walla Walla High School, currently a University Student. As a Junior, Ava was unwilling to let a group of people who wanted certain library books banned go unchallenged. She established a Banned Book Club and activated her community to get involved.



Kelvie Comer - AAUW Washington State Online President



Kelvie C. Comer, Ed.D.
AAUW-Washington State
Online Branch President
United States

Professional Highlights

- Principal, Independent Non-Profit Organization Management Consultant
- AAUW Washington State President (2012 - 2016), AAUW Nominating Committee, Chair. (2014-2015); also serve on AAUW-WA Tech Trek Committee, Professional Women's Night Chair, Corporate Fundraising
- Dean of Education, Health, and Human Services; Central Michigan University
- Interim Provost, Alma College, Michigan
- Dean of the School of Professional Studies and Graduate School, Eastern Connecticut State University
- Interim Dean, College of Fine and Applied Arts, The University of Akron, Ohio

Education

- Temple University, Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), Master of Education (M.Ed.),
- Penn State University, Bachelor's Degree, Secondary Education, English/Language Arts Teacher Education

Dorothy McBride- Facilitator

Dorothy E McBride, professor emeritus of political science at Florida Atlantic University, earned her B.A. at University of Montana and an MA and PhD from Vanderbilt University.



In her career at FAU, she specialized in teaching and research in comparative politics and women and public policy and published several books and articles.

She also helped establish the M.A. in women's studies program.

In 2005, she retired and moved to Tacoma, WA. After years of scholarly exploration of feminist influence in policy making in US and Western Europe, she turned to advocacy to challenge gender hierarchies and raise women's status.

In AAUW, she found allies in this endeavor and now serves as public policy chair for the WA Online branch.

Timeline – History of US Book Banning - DETAILS

Timeline – History of US Book Banning

1650

Massachusetts Bay colonist William Pynchon published *The Meritorious Price of Our Redemption*, a pamphlet that argued that anyone who was obedient to God and followed Christian teachings on Earth could get into heaven.

Colonists denounced him as a heretic, burned his pamphlet, and banned it—

- First event of its kind in what would later become the U.S.
- Only four copies of his controversial tract survive today.

1850s

Multiple states outlawed expressing anti-slavery sentiments, such as:

- Abolitionist author Harriet Beecher Stowe defied in 1851 with the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Timeline – History of US Book Banning, continued...

1873

War against books went federal with the passage of the Comstock Act, a congressional law that made it illegal to possess “obscene” or “immoral” texts or articles or send them through the mail.

Criminalized activities of birth control advocates and forced popular pamphlets like Margaret Sanger’s Family Limitation to be banned.

Boston, the capital of the state that had sanctioned the first book burning in the U.S. Boston’s book censors challenged everything they considered “indecent,”

- from Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*, which the society’s president called a “darling morsel of literary filth,”
- to Ernest Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms*.

Timeline – History of US Book Banning, continued...

1873 continued...

- New England Watch and Ward Society, a private [organization](#) that included many of Boston's most elite residents had as their mission to address the 'moral evil' in society. Many of their activities included the following.



- Petitioned against printed materials they found objectionable,
- Sued booksellers,
- Pressured law enforcement and courts to bring obscenity charges against authors, a
- Spurred the **Boston Public Library** to lock copies of the most controversial books, including books by
 - Balzac and Zola, in a restricted [room](#) known as the Inferno.

Timeline – History of US Book Banning, continued...

The Jim Crow-era South (1870s – 1960)

The United Daughters of the Confederacy made several successful attempts to ban school textbooks that did not offer a sympathetic view of the South's loss in the Civil War.

There were also attempts to ban *The Rabbits' Wedding*, a 1954 children's book by Garth Williams that depicted a white rabbit marrying a black rabbit, because opponents felt it encouraged interracial relationships.

Timeline – History of US Book Banning, continued...

The Jim Crow-era South (1870s – 1960), continued...

- In the 1950s, some school and public librarians began to organize against book bans. They responded to a rash of challenges against books McCarthy-era censors felt encouraged communism and socialism



- *Huckleberry Finn,*
- *The Catcher in the Rye,*
- *To Kill a Mockingbird* and
- even *The Canterbury Tales.*

Timeline – History of US Book Banning, continued...

1969

Supreme Court weighed in on students' right to free expression.

In *Tinker v. Des Moines*, a case involving students who wore black armbands protesting the Vietnam War to school, the court [ruled](#) 7-2 that “neither teachers nor students shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate.”

1982

Supreme Court in *Pico v Island Trees Board of Education* overtly addressed schoolbooks in a case involving a group of students who sued a New York school board for removing books by authors like

- Kurt Vonnegut
- Langston Hughes

That the board deemed “anti-American, anti-Christian, anti-Semitic, and just plain filthy.”

Librarians contended with so many book challenges in the early 1980s that they [created](#) Banned Book Week, an annual event centered around the freedom to read.