

119TH CONGRESS

2nd SESSION

H. RES.

Expressing concern about the growing problem of book banning and the proliferation of threats to freedom of expression in the United States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. RASKIN submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the
Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Expressing concern about the growing problem of book banning
and the proliferation of threats to freedom of expression in
the United States.

Whereas the overwhelming majority of voters in the United
States oppose book bans;

Whereas an overwhelming majority of voters in the United States
support educators teaching about the civil rights movement,
the history and experiences of Native Americans, enslaved
Africans, immigrants facing discrimination, and the ongoing
effects of racism;

Whereas an overwhelming majority of Americans are confident
that their community's public schools select appropriate
books for students to read;

Whereas, in 1969, the Supreme Court of the United States held in *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*, 393 U.S. 503 (1969), that students do not “shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate”;

Whereas, in 1982, a plurality of the Supreme Court of the United States wrote in *Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 v. Pico*, 457 U.S. 853 (1982), that schools may not remove library books based on “narrowly partisan or political grounds”, as this kind of censorship will result in “official suppression of ideas”;

Whereas the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States protects freedom of speech and the freedom to read and write;

Whereas Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”;

Whereas PEN America has identified more than 12,000 instances of individual books banned between July 2025 and June 2026;

Whereas books banned between July 2025 and June 2026 affected more than 7,000 unique titles, censoring the works of more than 4,000 authors, illustrators, and translators;

Whereas the majority of book bans were enacted without following the best practice guidelines for book challenges outlined by the American Library Association, the National Coalition Against Censorship, and the National Council of Teachers of English;

Whereas the unimpeded sharing of ideas and the freedom to read are essential to a strong democracy;

Whereas books do not require readers to agree with topics, themes, or viewpoints but instead allow readers to explore and engage with differing perspectives to form and inform their own views;

Whereas suppressing the freedom to read and denying access to literature, history, and knowledge are repressive and antidemocratic tactics used by authoritarian regimes against their people;

Whereas book bans violate the rights of students, families, residents, and citizens based on the political, ideological, and cultural preferences of the specific individuals imposing the bans;

Whereas book bans have multifaceted, harmful consequences on—

(1) students, who have a right to access a diverse range of stories and perspectives, especially students from historically marginalized backgrounds whose communities are often targeted by thought control measures;

(2) educators and librarians, who are operating in some States in an increasingly punitive and surveillance- oriented environment and experience a chilling effect in their work;

(3) authors whose works are targeted and suppressed;

(4) parents who want their children to attend public schools that remain open to curiosity, discovery, and the freedom to read; and

(5) community members who want free access to a range of uncensored information and knowledge from their public libraries;

Whereas classic and award-winning literature and books that have been part of school curricula for decades have been challenged, removed from libraries pending review, or outright banned from schools, including—

- (1) “Brave New World” by Aldous Huxley;
- (2) “The Handmaid’s Tale” by Margaret Atwood;
- (3) “Anne Frank’s Diary: The Graphic Adaptation” adapted by Ari Folman;
- (4) “Their Eyes Were Watching God” by Zora Neal Hurston; and
- (5) “To Kill a Mockingbird” by Harper Lee;

Whereas books, particularly those written by and about outsiders, newcomers, and individuals from marginalized backgrounds, are facing a heightened risk of being banned;

Whereas, according to PEN America, a disproportionate number of books banned or otherwise restricted in the United States have LGBTQ+ characters or themes that recognize the equal humanity and dignity of all individuals despite differences, including—

- (1) “And Tango Makes Three” by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell; and
- (2) “This Book Is Gay” by Juno Dawson;

Whereas many books, both fiction and nonfiction, that have been targeted for bans or restrictions in the United States are books about race, racism, or feature characters of color, including—

- (1) “The Story of Ruby Bridges” by Robert Coles and illustrated by George Ford;
- (2) “Letter from Birmingham Jail” by Martin Luther King, Jr.;

- (3) “Thank You, Jackie Robinson” by Barbara Cohen;
- (4) “Malala: A Hero For All” by Shana Corey;
- (5) “Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story” by Kevin Noble Maillard;
- (6) “Hair Love” by Matthew A. Cherry;
- (7) “Good Trouble: Lessons From the Civil Rights Playbook” by Christopher Noxon; and
- (8) “We Are All Born Free: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Pictures”;

Whereas the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund has reported a dramatic surge in challenges at libraries and schools to the inclusion of graphic novels that depict the diversity of civic life in the United States and the painful and complex history of racism, homophobia, anti-Asian bias and antisemitism embedded in the human experience, including—

- (1) “Maus” by Art Spiegelman;
- (2) “New Kid” by Jerry Craft;
- (3) “Drama” by Raina Telgemeier; and
- (4) “American Born Chinese” by Gene Luen Yang;

Whereas books addressing death, grief, mental illness, and suicide are targeted alongside nonfiction books that discuss feelings and emotions written for teenage and young adult audiences that frequently confront these topics;

Whereas, during congressional hearings on April 7, 2022, May 19, 2022, and September 12, 2023, students, parents, teachers, librarians, and school administrators testified to the chilling and fear-spreading effects that book bans have on education and the school environment;

Whereas, since 2021, State legislation censoring certain content within schools and libraries has been enacted across the country, resulting in more than 30,000 book bans;

Whereas an increasing amount of book censorship goes unreported and may be higher than is able to be reported, due to mass removals implementing vaguely-written State legislation and a lack of transparency about district-based removals.

Whereas, according to PEN America, from July 2025 to June 2026, 24 States across the country limited access to certain books for limited or indefinite periods of time, including—

- (1) Texas, where at least 8,000 books in total have been banned or restricted in 45 school districts;
- (2) Florida, where at least 3,000 books in total have been banned or restricted in 35 school districts;
- (3) Ohio, where at least 115 books in total have been banned or restricted in one school district;
- (4) Utah, where at least 100 books in total have been banned or restricted in 5 school districts; and
- (5) Michigan, where at least 65 books in total have been banned or restricted in 2 school districts;

Whereas the President of the United States has repeatedly expressed public support for the censorship of certain subjects, through public statements and Executive Orders, including gender, sexuality, and race;

Whereas, following these executive orders in 2025, Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools removed books related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, “gender ideology,” and anything that would suggest “that America’s founding documents are racist or sexist,” resulting in the

censorship of classroom instruction, student activities, and removal of at least 596 books in DoDEA schools;

Whereas, following these same executive orders, the Department of Defense directed all military academies to identify and remove books from their libraries that deal with issues such as race, “gender ideology”, and other “divisive concepts” that the Administration considers “incompatible with the department’s core mission” and led to the temporary removal of nearly 400 books from the U.S. Naval Academy’s Nimitz Library, including “I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings” by Maya Angelou;

Whereas grants administered by the National Endowment for the Arts, and National Endowment for the Humanities and other federal agencies have been terminated or revoked for using language related to race, gender, and LGBTQ+ identity or addressing social inequality;

Whereas the President of the United States has further signed Executive Orders targeting the Smithsonian, an independent federal trust instrumentality of the United States which has served as a global model for scholarship and public engagement documenting America’s full and complex history, for promoting “improper ideology”; and

Whereas the Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights has claimed book bans are a “hoax”, ended investigations of alleged discrimination related to book banning, and fired the staffer in charge of addressing the book banning crisis; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

- (1) expresses concern about the spreading problem of book banning and the proliferating threats to freedom of expression in the United States;

(2) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to supporting the freedom of expression of writers that is protected under the First Amendment to the Constitution and the freedom of all individuals in the United States to read books without government censorship;

(3) calls on local governments and school districts to follow best practice guidelines when addressing challenges to books;

(4) calls on local governments and school districts to protect the rights of students to learn and the ability of educators and librarians to teach, including by providing students with the opportunity to read a wide array of books reflecting the full breadth and diversity of viewpoints and perspectives; and

(5) calls for the repeal of executive orders and rescission of directives that have enacted content-based restrictions on the freedom to read and learn in United States public schools.