



Although the frequency has varied over the years, the United States has had a long-term relationship with [book banning](#). In recent years, we have seen an astonishing increase. Approximately [3,362 recorded book-banning instances](#) occurred from 2022 to 2023, and that number is rising. While people often associate book bans with schools and libraries, their damaging effect ripples throughout the publishing industry. Historically, [publishers](#) have played a leading role in the fight against book bans and censorship. However, with increased [political influence](#) and [book-banning legislation](#), many publishers find themselves in a difficult situation. The publishing industry is “a multi-billion dollar business with extraordinary cultural power and influence” (Bosman). Due to that status, publishers struggle to find a balance between heeding or fighting book-banning legislation, censorship, profit, and culture.

Book-banning movements are the most popular form of [censorship](#) in the United States. Those movements are forefronted by private individuals, elected officials, political and religious organizations, parents, and others. Dimitrije Curcic states, “Parents are historically the most active group when it comes to initiating book bans across the country.” These groups advocate for the banning and removing books from libraries and store shelves because they object to the content, themes, or ideas presented by the author or, to some extent, the publisher. Advocates argue that the targeted books contain [dangerous content](#) that will negatively affect vulnerable groups such as young readers. Unsurprisingly, the most frequently targeted books appeal to students of all ages, [Young Adult](#) and [Children’s books](#). Several recurring themes of [banned content](#) are in the targeted books,

- Discussions or instances of violence and physical abuse
- Discussions of health and wellbeing, including mental health, puberty, and substance abuse.
- Characters of Color or themes of race and racism
- LGBTQ+ characters or themes of gender and sexuality.

Books concerning challenging topics, specifically those about the experiences of marginalized identities, are consistently labeled as harmful and explicit by advocates for book bans.

As worrying as these book-ban waves are, many people within the industry are willing to fight back. PEN America, Penguin Random House, authors, and parents have filed a lawsuit against Florida's [unconstitutional removal of books](#). Advocates against book bans have filed cases in other states. Still, Illinois' recent [ban on book bans](#) is the most astounding outcome.

Unity and support are essential during these troubling times. The adverse effects of book bannings span across every level of the industry. Those who believe publishers and authors benefit from banned books while schools and libraries suffer do not realize we are all in this together. Although some books thrive off controversy and publicity, others get forgotten in the near-endless sea of [banned and challenged book lists](#).

Here at the UNGPress, we support writers regardless of background. We do not want anyone's story unread due to bothersome book bannings. We are currently accepting submissions, so please check out our guidelines today!

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