

Submitter: Jenna Seim
On Behalf Of:
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Books that contain topics that are often uncomfortable to read and difficult to imagine are at the root of book challenges. Censoring these stories suppresses young people's chances to be affirmed in their own uncomfortable and difficult life experiences, and disregards young people's ability to see themselves reflected in the stories they read. Book bans deny the chance for young people to build empathy for experiences outside of their own. When 86% of LGBTQ+ students report being harassed or assaulted at school and 2 in 5 LGBTQ+ students of color report being bullied or harassed based on their ethnicity, this is a call to action to keep these stories accessible for all. Further, banning books suppresses young people's ability to engage in difficult discourse, for fear of "inappropriateness" or "offensiveness". This teaches young people that the way to handle these topics is to avoid them. Oftentimes, young people cannot avoid these topics because they are the ones living these topics. And for those who do not share the experiences of these stories, the safest way for them to engage with these topics is through literature. I am writing to urge your support as we strive to protect all children's and teens' rights to read as well as the rights and livelihood of the authors who are affected by this challenge. The protection of free expression and the right for LGBTQ+ and BIPOC young people to see themselves represented in their libraries is of the utmost importance.