CENSORSHIP
BY THE NUMBERS 2019

Censorship is a dead end. It limits exploration and creates barriers to access information. The path toward the freedom to read starts at the library. Learn more at ala.org/bbooks.

WHAT IS A CHALLENGE?
Attempt to remove or restrict materials or services based on content.

WHAT IS A BAN?
Removal of materials or cancellation of services based on content.

WHERE DO CHALLENGES TAKE PLACE?
- 66% Public libraries
- 19% School libraries
- 12% Schools
- 2% Academia
- 1% Special/prison libraries

Statistics based on 377 responses

DEFINITIONS
- Challenge: Attempt to remove or restrict materials or services based on content.
- Ban: Removal of materials or cancellation of services based on content.

REASONS FOR CHALLENGES
- 18% Parents
- 13% Board/administration
- 12% Political/religious groups
- 8% Librarians/teachers
- 3% Elected officials
- 1% Students

Statistics based on 361 responses

CENSORSHIP BY THE NUMBERS

- Total materials affected in censorship attempts in 2019: 607
  - (including books, films, newspapers)
  - +14% Increase from last year

- 56% Books
- 22% Programs, meeting, artwork rooms
- 9% Displays, artwork
- 8% Films
- 5% Other*

* Includes social media, hate crimes, games, filtering, databases, newspapers, magazines

READERS ON CENSORSHIP

“Had I had a book like that on the shelf, I might have realized a lot sooner that I could love myself. I might have realized a lot sooner that it’s O.K. to feel different.”

Community member on keeping “Prince & Knight” on a public library’s shelves

“Obviously, I’m a Christian, and I take my God very seriously, but if I just simply ban everything that’s going to be said about my God or about my faith, then I’m living in my own little, narrow world.”

Pastor on the inclusion of “The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time” on a school’s summer reading list

CENSORSHIP STATISTICS
COMPILED BY:
OFFICE FOR INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM
AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION