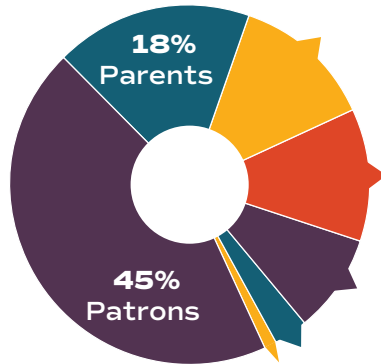# CENSORSHIP

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.**

WHO INITIATES CHALLENGES?

- **18%** Parents
- **45%** Patrons
- **13%** Board/administration
- **12%** Political/religious groups
- **8%** Librarians/teachers
- **3%** Elected officials
- **1%** Students

Statistics based on 361 responses

WHAT IS A CHALLENGE?

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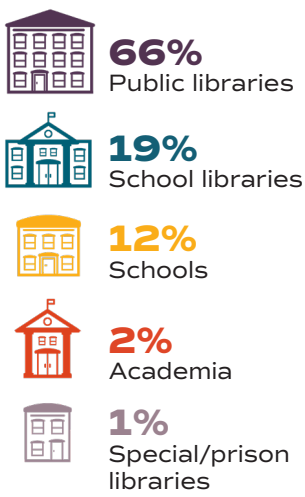
WHAT IS A BAN?

Removal of materials or cancellation of services based on content

REASONS FOR CHALLENGES

RACIST CONTENT
SPREADS MISINFORMATION
WITCHCRAFT
GENDER DYSPHORIA
ABORTION
NUDITY RACIAL SLURS
SEXUALLY EXPLICIT
PRO-IMMIGRANT ANTI-SEMITIC
DRUGS DRINKING
CLIMATE CHANGE ILLEGAL ALIENS
INFLUENCING VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE
RAPE
ANTI-POLICE
UNSCIENTIFIC IDEOLOGY STEREOTYPICAL REPRESENTATIONS
VIOLENCE
INACCURATE
LGBTQIA+
SEX EDUCATION
GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATIONS
PORNOGRAPHIC
PROFANITY
BIASED
GRAMMATICALLY INCORRECT
RADICAL ISLAM
FAKE NEWS
POLITICAL VIEWPOINT
LEFTIST PROPAGANDA
RELIGIOUS VIEWPOINT
TRANSGENDER CHARACTER
SUICIDE

Each word and phrase in this graphic is cited from 2019 censorship reports

WHERE DO CHALLENGES TAKE PLACE?

- **66%** Public libraries
- **19%** School libraries
- **12%** Schools
- **2%** Academia
- **1%** Special/prison libraries

Statistics based on 377 responses

607

Total materials affected in censorship attempts in 2019 (including books, films, newspapers)

+14%

Increase from last year

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."

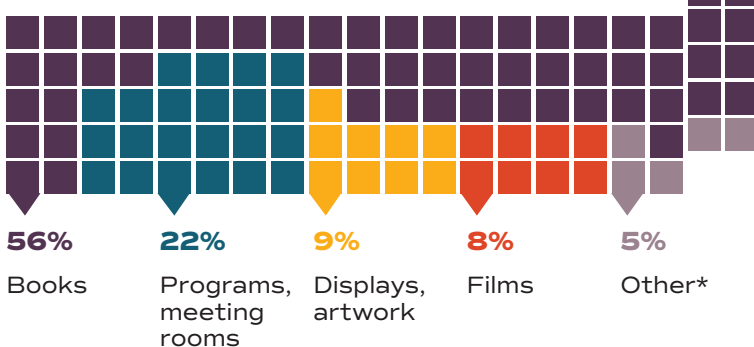*Community member on keeping "Prince & Knight" on a public library's shelves*

"
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

BOOKS AND BEYOND

The ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom tracked **377 challenges** in 2019. Here's the breakdown:

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

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