

Protect the Freedom to Read

In 2023, the American Library Association (ALA) documented a record surge in book challenges and censorship attempts across the country. The number of unique book titles targeted for **censorship increased by 65%** compared to 2022, reaching an unprecedented **4,240 titles**. This represents a staggering 128% increase from 2021. Alarming, **47% of targeted books represented the experiences of LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC individuals**. Despite these numbers, public opinion strongly opposes book bans. A 2022 ALA survey found 71 percent of voters, across party lines, reject removing books from libraries. You are not alone in fighting censorship. The Authors Guild has successfully fought bans in courts across the country.

Actions for Authors

Your voice matters. Here are some things authors can do to object when their books are challenged:

- **Put your work (and words) in context.** Those who challenge books often use a single quote or image that does not reflect the book as a whole. Unite Against Book Bans has Book Resumes which provides accurate summaries of challenged books (uniteagainstbookbans.org/book-resumes).
- **Speak out with sincerity and clarity.** Nothing undercuts the portrayal of writers as demons and "groomers" as an author speaking about their work. Authors Against Book Bans (www.authorsagainstbookbans.org) has helped authors get to and speak at school board meetings.
- **Notify your publisher when your books are challenged.** Some of them provide free books in response, increasing access and visibility of challenged books.
- **Maintain a sense of community and have trusted members in your circle.** Defending yourself and your work can be draining. If your safety is threatened, consult PEN America's Online Harassment Manual (pen.org/press-release/online-harassment-field-manual-launch)
- **Reach out to the Authors Guild and other organizations for assistance.** Sometimes book challenges violate a library or school's own policies, in which case groups like the National Coalition Against Censorship and the Authors Guild may be able to write a letter. The Authors Guild can also bring forth legal action and provide other support. Contact us at staff@authorsguild.org.

Access the Authors Guild's Book Ban Kit here:

<https://authorsguild.org/resource/stop-book-bans-toolkit/>

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