



Niche Academy

Understanding Intellectual Freedom and Censorship

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Intellectual Freedom

BECAUSE
BANNING BOOKS
SILENCES STORIES.

LIBRARIES
TRANSFORM
AN INITIATIVE OF THE AMERICAN
LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

LIBRARIESTRANSFORM.ORG

Autonomy

- Access to information is vital for human autonomy as it is “instrumentally valuable” for having “the moral capacity to make one’s own choices” (Barbakoff 2010, Introduction).
- Five competences for human autonomy:
 1. **access to information about many life possibilities**
 2. self-reflection
 3. critical thinking
 4. self-worth
 5. willingness/ability to act”(Barbakoff 2010, “What are the practical applications...”).



Flourishing

A person is watering a plant in a garden. The person is wearing a dark shirt and pants, and is holding a watering can. The background is a blurred garden with green plants and a wooden fence. The lighting is soft, suggesting a late afternoon or early morning setting.

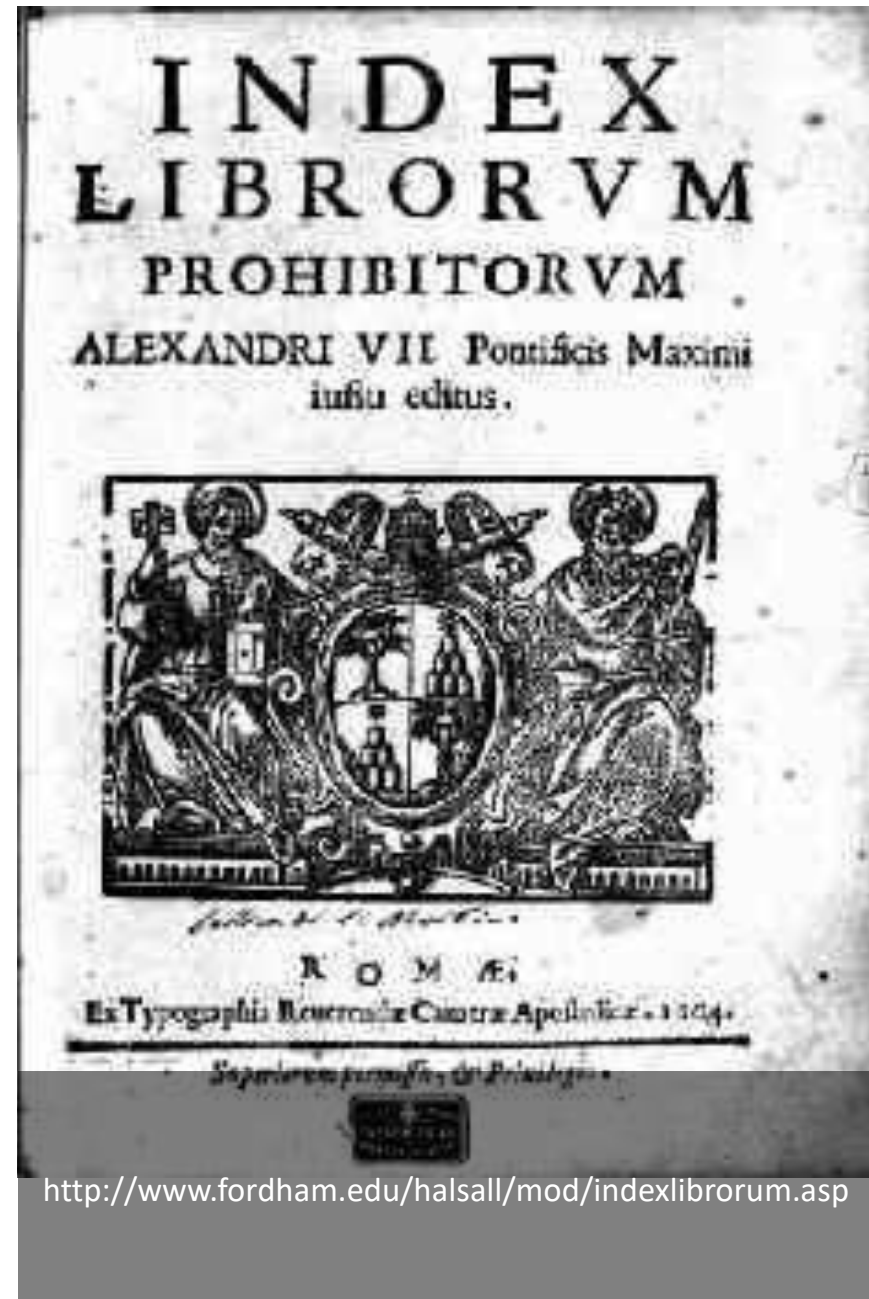
- “ ...the good that results from living in accord with the virtues. In its simplest form, flourishing is the idea that to be good is to fulfill one’s purpose in life.
- Put another way, to flourish is to pursue the ideal self. Since everyone determines his or her ideal self, flourishing is an internally created good.”

(Burgess, 2016, 134)

CENSORSHIP PRACTICES



History of Censorship



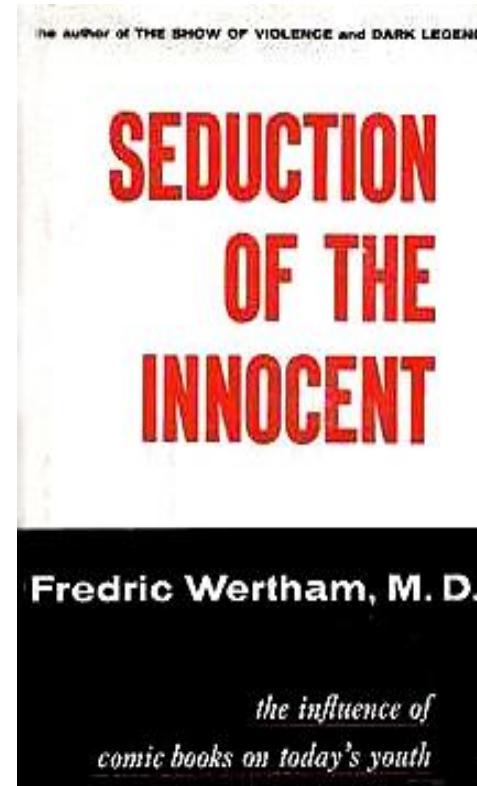
Models of Censorship

- State-sponsored
- Institutional
- Individual



Anthony Comstock

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony_Comstock



Freedom of Expression – UN Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

Article 19 - Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontier

Mill – On Liberty

Four Grounds for Freedom of Expression (p. 50)

1. Silenced opinions may be true

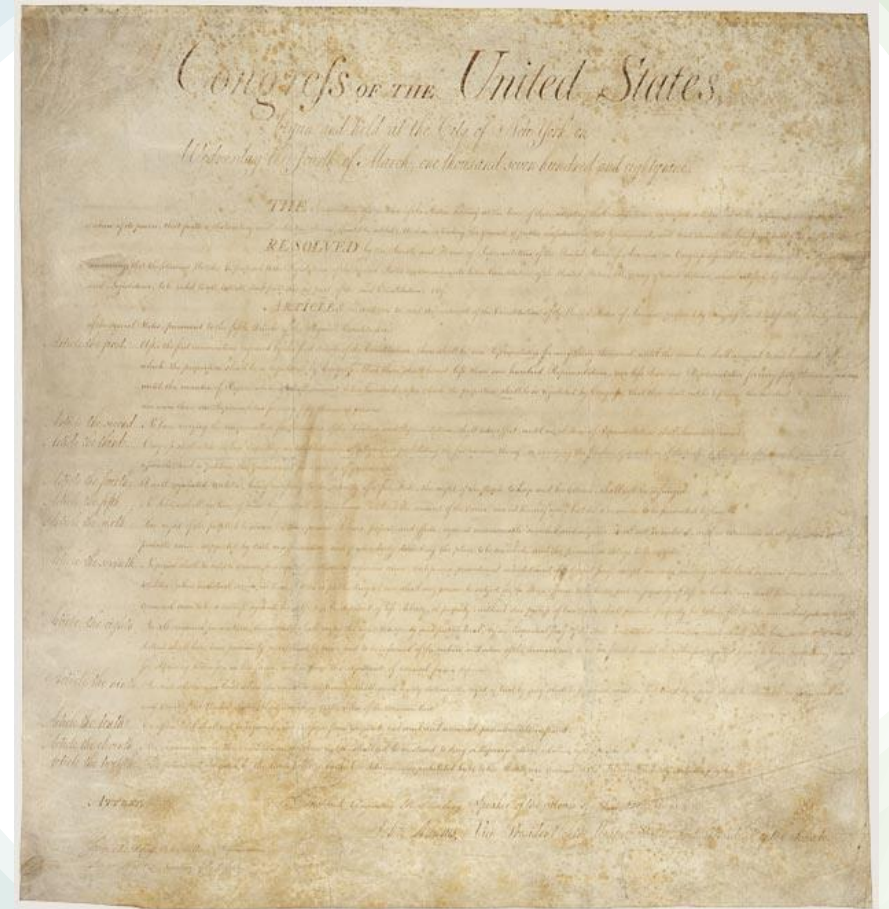
2. Silenced opinion may contain some grain of truth even if it is held in error

3. Truth must be contested or it is simply prejudiced opinion

4. Meaning of truth must be held with conviction from reason and personal experience.

The First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or **abridging the freedom of speech**, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.



Important Cases

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/censorship/courtcases>

Tinker v. Des Moines School District (1969)

Miller v. California (1973)

Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District v. Pico (1982)

Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier (1988)

United States v. American Library Association (2003)

Professional Ethics – ALA Code

II. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.

III. We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.

IV. We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders.

VII. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.

IX. We affirm the inherent dignity and rights of every person. We work to recognize and dismantle systemic and individual biases; to confront inequity and oppression; to enhance diversity and inclusion; and to advance racial and social justice in our libraries, communities, profession, and associations through awareness, advocacy, education, collaboration, services, and allocation of resources and spaces.

Library Bill of Rights

Library BILL *of* RIGHTS

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and **enlightenment of all people** of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II Libraries should provide materials and information **presenting all points of view** on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III Libraries should **challenge censorship** in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with **resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas**.

V A person's right to use a library should not be **denied** or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such **facilities available on an equitable basis**, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

VII All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a **right to privacy and confidentiality** in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted in 1964 by the ALA Council and reaffirmed by the ALA Board in 1980, 1989, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2015, 2019, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 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Freedom to Read Statement (2004)

1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.
2. Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.
3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.
4. There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.
5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.
6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.
7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.

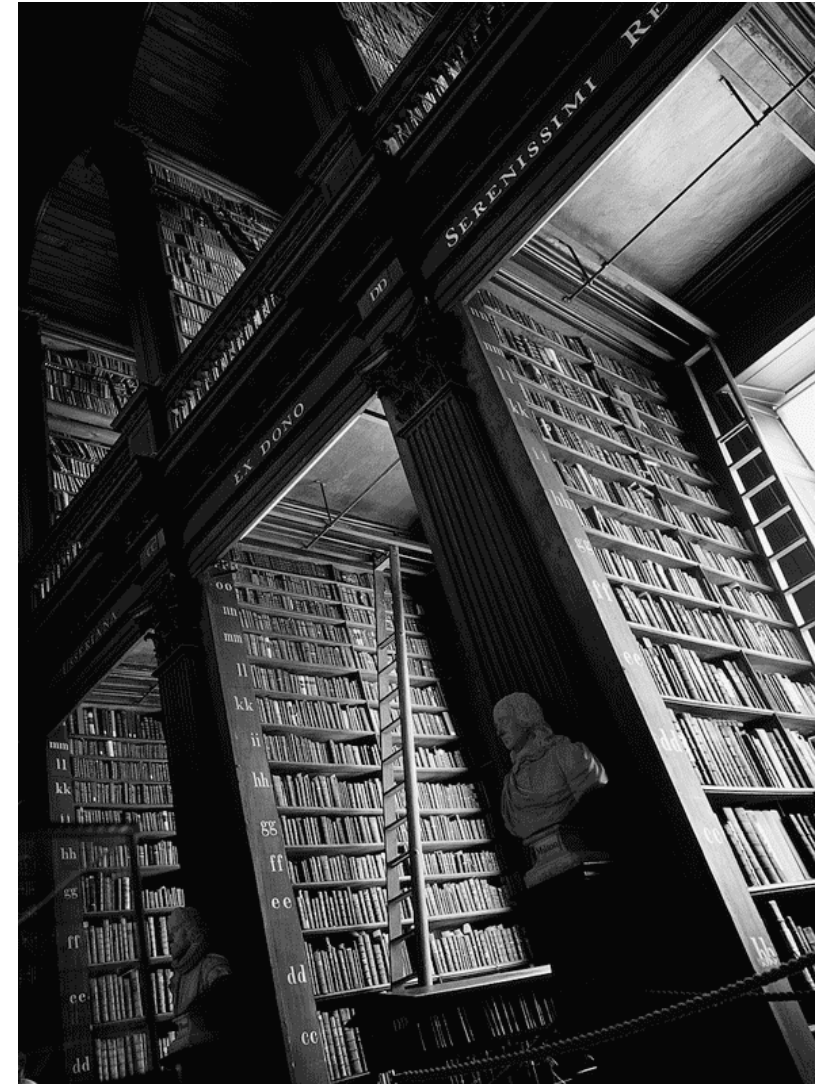
Freedom to View Statement (1990)

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.



Discourse of Censorship

- Relationships among
 - Power
 - Identity
 - Nature of Knowledge
- Status of libraries in communities
- Outsider perceptions of institutional practices
- Reading Practices

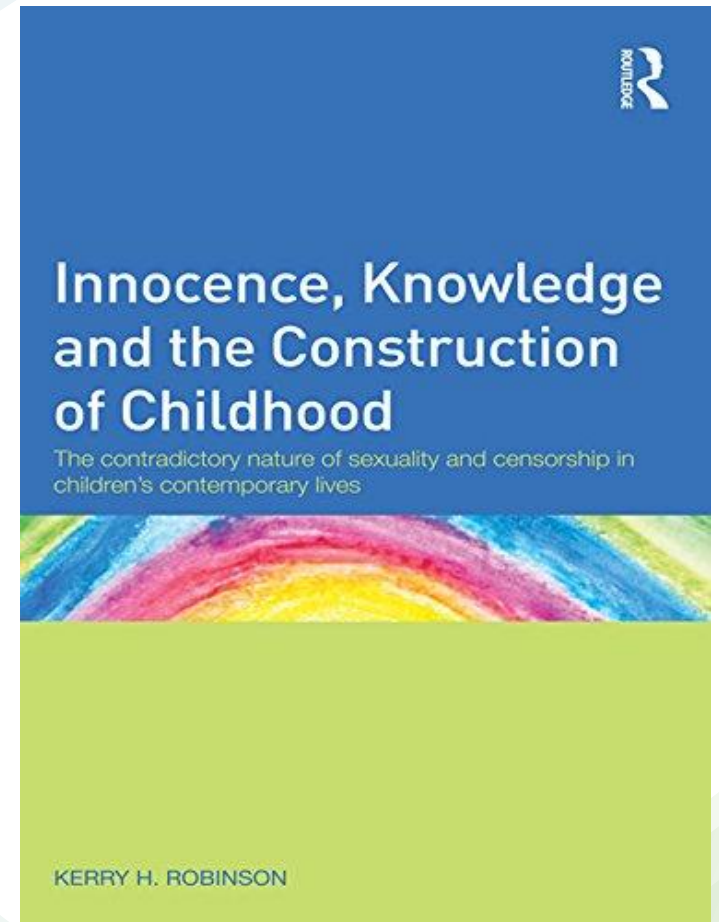





Difficult Knowledge

“Knowledge that many adults find challenging to address in their own lives but especially with children” (p. 9)

Censorship attempts are often harmful because they deny children both agency and the vocabulary to describe their own bodies and lives.





Strive to achieve representation—
not balance.

-Jenna Freedman

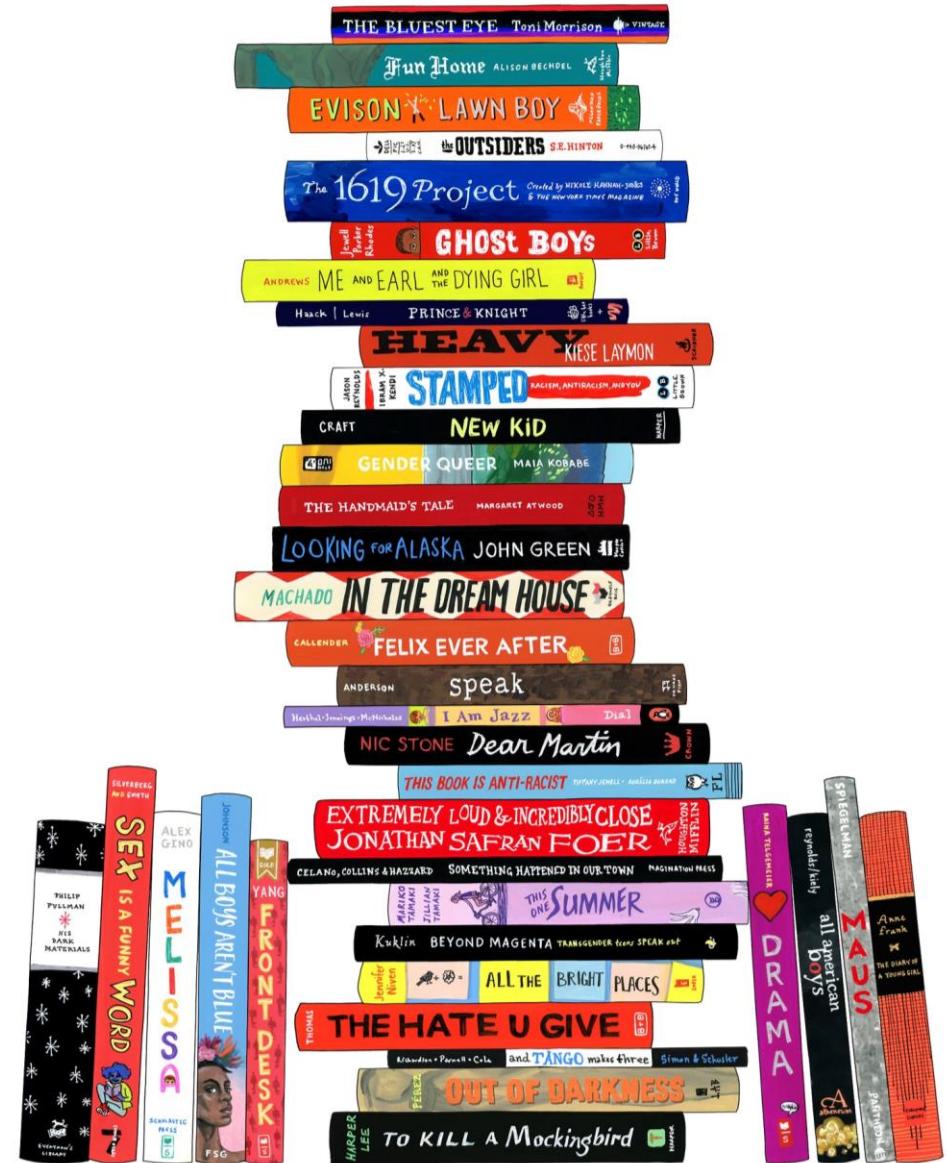
Back to the Full Spectrum of Liberal Values

- 1. Human Rights – Against Tyranny
- 2. Economic Freedom
- 3. Individual Progress
- 4. Social space
- 5. Group identity
- (Freedon, 2015, p. 13)
- <https://www.thisiscolossal.com/2016/06/spiraling-rainbow-vortexes-by-jen-stark/>



READ BANNED BOOKS

- Image by Jane Mount
- https://www.idealbookshelf.com/products/ideal-bookshelf-1223-banned-books?_pos=1&_sid=c701964b0&_ss=r



Jane Mount

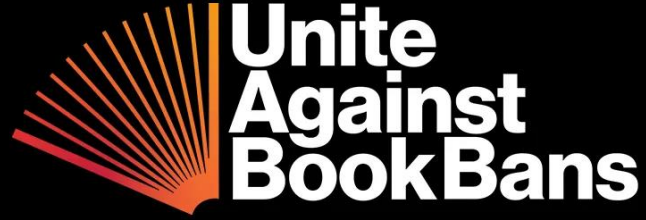
Be Prepared! - Organize



<https://twitter.com/flsadele/status/1460367375749066757/photo/1>



<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/02/us/york-pennsylvania-school-books.html>



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