



LIBRARY 2.023
WORLDWIDE VIRTUAL
CONFERENCE

Banned
Books
and
Censorship

June 8, 2023
12 – 3 p.m. PDT



► Library20.com

SJSU | SCHOOL OF
INFORMATION

Presenter Name(s):

**Peter Bromberg, Associate Director
EveryLibrary | EveryLibrary.org | FightForTheFirst.org**

Session Title:

**Real World Policy and Messaging Issues
From the Trenches**

Presenter: start the recording when you begin your session

Participants:

- Your audio and video are turned off. Do not turn them on or play with them, it will interrupt the presenter.
- Click on chat to connect with other participants.
- Tweet using hashtags **#library2023 #bannedbookscensorship**

Did you start the recording?

When you have started your session, and you reach this slide, please make sure you have started the recording.

Look for the **Record** button on the bottom right of your screen.

Founding Partner

SJSU | **SCHOOL OF
INFORMATION**

Real World Policy and Messaging Issues From the Trenches

Practical advice on shoring up your policy
and messaging to defend against ~~standing~~ ~~standing~~



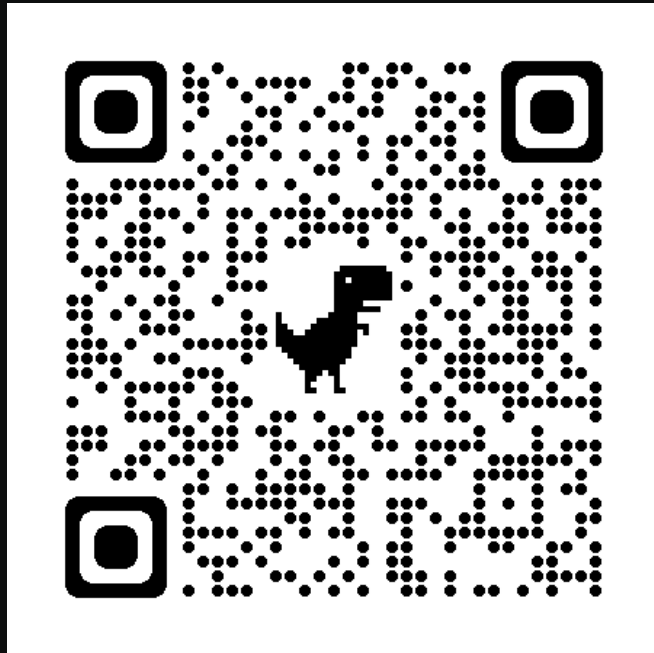
Library 2.0 Virtual Conference June 8, 2023

Banned Books and Censorship: Current
Intellectual Freedom Issues in the Library

Peter Bromberg | EveryLibrary | EveryLibrary.org

RESOURCES

bit.ly/realworldmessaging





OBJECTIVES

Attendees will learn practical ways to navigate in our increasingly polarized political environment, using policy and effective messaging to inoculate and defend against the well-organized national wave of book-banning

about everylibrary



EveryLibrary | Pro Bono 501(c)4



Political Action Committee for Libraries

- Election Days and Negotiations
- Support for Legislative School Librarian Agendas
- Crisis/Censorship/Rapid Response
- Outreach and Activism to the Public

100% Donor Supported

EveryLibrary Institute - 501(c)3

Research and Policy Think Tank

- Research Agenda
- Training Programs
- Programmatic Partnerships and Coalitions



Who We Work With on Censorship and Attacks on Libraries

- **Librarians** (public and school)
- **Parents / Citizen Advocacy Groups**
- **State Libraries and Associations**
- **Directors**
- **Boards** (Library, LEA, Foundation, Friends)
- **Legislators**
- **Coalition Partners**

We work with everyone, on political problems and solutions
at every point in the system across 50 states

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Environmental Scan: Challenges are on the rise

- **We are seeing Increases in public libraries challenges** from groups that were organized to protest masks, and then turned to school libraries and curricula.
- **The nationwide network** of individuals and groups **is getting stronger** and better networked.
- **Challenges are focused on diverse content** (Authors/topics related to Black, Indigenous, or Persons of Color; Black American History aka “CRT books”)

Environmental Scan: Challenges are on the rise

It's not just book challenges, it's also legislation and actions to take over or disempower Library Boards

- **Anti-access legislation** is being drafted/passed
- **Legislation allowing for civil and criminal penalties** against librarians, teachers, board members
- **Legislative bans or limits on discussing or teaching** certain topics ("anti-indoctrination" bills)
- **Boards are politicized** Laws are being re-written to allow politicization of board appointments

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD POLICY

The Role and Value of Good Policy

- Policy flows from & reflects the purpose/mission of the Library
- Policy governs day-to-day operations
- Policy ensures compliance with laws and regulations and protects the rights of all patrons and staff
- Policy reflects commitment to ALL residents
- Policy provides transparency in standards and procedures
- Policy ensures due process and consistency of service
- Policy-making is one of the most important Board duties
- Policies require full understanding/support of all Board members

Elements of a Good Collection Development Policy

- **Literary quality**; Attention of critics, reviewers, awards, popularity
- **Expertise, reputation, qualifications** and significance of Author/Producer/Publisher
- Content reflects **a wide variety of perspectives** and authors
- **Accuracy, currency**, timeliness, and validity
- **Local**, self-published, **independent**, and **small** producers
- **Format**: Physical quality of; effectiveness of; appropriateness of; Resources in formats that **meet the needs of users with disabilities**
- **Cost**; Availability of discounts; efficiency of vendors
- **Availability of subscriptions / standing orders** for popular materials, reference and nonfiction items published or released annually



Elements of a Good Collection Development Policy

- Aims for a **balanced, diverse, and inclusive** collection;
- **Seeks a variety** of ideas, information, stories, and experiences
- Considers the need for **all subjects** covered **and viewpoints** expressed
- **Anticipates** needs; Considers **public demand**
- Considers the **availability** of the same, or similar, materials in **other libraries** or agencies

Elements of Good Policy: Summary

- Is it **good**? (i.e. well-reviewed content; trusted authors/publishers)
- Is it **good**? (i.e. physically well-constructed)
- Is it **good**? (i.e. accurate, timely, valid)
- Is it **affordable**? (cost? discounts?)
- Is it **reflective of a variety of perspectives**
- Is it in **accessible or preferred formats**?

Elements of a **Reconsideration of Materials** policy

- **References the selection policy.** Reinforces that selection is based on the merits of the material and its value to the collection.
- Stresses that the **use of materials by patrons is an individual matter**
- Notes that the **responsibility for children/teen use of materials rests with their parents** or guardians. (Library does not act "in loco parentis")
- Places Limits on Who Can Initiate Process: **Only residents in the library's funding jurisdiction may initiate** the process.
- **Require that patron has read/listened to/watched the whole work.**
"Under penalty of perjury, I swear or affirm that..."
- **There is a transparent procedure** that guides a deliberative process.

Elements of a **Reconsideration of Materials** policy

- Notes that decisions regarding content in the library collection may implicate certain **protections under the First Amendment**.
- The Director or designee shall apply the selection criteria and consider each work as a whole. **Excerpts will not be assessed out of context.**
- The policy should **specify who will notify the patron and by when**. *Recommend that this come from the Director or Head of Acquisitions.*

Appropriate Application **Reconsideration of Materials** policy

- Appeal **should not re-litigate** the decision
- Appeal **should focus narrowly on whether the policies and procedures were followed** by staff and Director (i.e. were selection criteria in policy appropriately applied?)
 - If they were followed, the decision should be upheld.
 - If they were not followed, Board should “remand” to Director to reconsider the request.
- Appeals are a possible **danger zone for the board**

Appropriate Application of **Reconsideration of Materials** policy

- Appeal should not re-litigate the decision
- Appeal should focus narrowly on whether the policies and procedures were followed by staff and Director (i.e. were selection criteria in policy appropriately applied?)
 - If they were followed, the decision should be upheld.
 - If they were not followed, board should “remand” to Director to reconsider the request.
- Appeals are a possible danger zone for the board



Effective Messaging

Requires us to speak their language

Framing our Message

Three Languages of Politics

We have to tailor our message to the audience in front of us.



Not every person cares about the same issues, or sees the world in the same way.

The Three Languages of Politics

by Arnold Kling

Progressive

Support the vulnerable, oppressed, marginalized

Speak to Equity , Social Justice

Libertarian

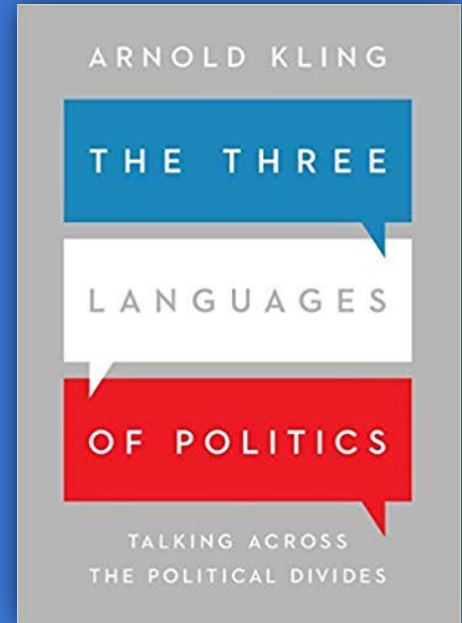
Support individual rights, liberty, and small government

Speak to Liberty, Gumption, and Self-Direction

Conservative

Support western values, traditions, morals, law and order

Speak to Shared Culture & Traditional American Values



Example: Framing Book Challenges

Progressive

Speak to Equity and Social Justice

“Having books representing traditionally underserved or marginalized communities helps kids see themselves represented in a positive way and helps others build understanding and empathy”

Example: Framing Book Challenges

Libertarian

Speak to Self-Direction and Liberty

“The Library, as an arm of the government, shouldn’t be determining what people should be reading. We believe citizens have the liberty to make those decisions for themselves. And we trust parents to parent their children. We don’t want to usurp their role.”

Example: Framing Book Challenges

Libertarian

Speak to Self-Direction and Liberty

“Offering a wide range of texts, formats, and ideas helps students critically evaluate and process information. Choosing what to read, within the framework of their family’s values and beliefs, prepares our kids for success and fosters their ability to safely and independently navigate information spaces like the Internet and social media.”

Example: Framing Book Challenges

Conservative

Speak to American Values / Strength / Law and Order

“ Our policies that protect access to legally published materials are guided by a century of law, and are based on First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States - which also protects our Freedom of Religion. America’s Founding Fathers believed that these bedrock rights needed to be protected for Americans to thrive and prosper. We don’t want to chip away at 1A”

Example: Framing Book Challenges

Conservative

Speak to American Values / Strength / Law and Order

“Parents tell us that they want to raise strong kids who will be able to compete and succeed in an increasingly diverse and global economy. It’s important to them that their kids learn as much as they can about the world; the good, the bad, and the ugly, so they’ll be well-prepared for career success and to be leaders in our community.”

Three Languages of Politics

DANGER WILL ROBINSON!

We have created very
progressive language
around libraries...



Three Languages of Politics

DANGER WILL ROBINSON!

We tend to default
to talking about the
library in ways
that reflect
**OUR OWN POLITICAL
WORLDVIEW**



Three Languages of Politics

DANGER WILL ROBINSON!

We must therefore
know our default
worldview and
intentionally use
language that will
appeal to others



Three Languages of Politics

DANGER WILL ROBINSON!

Talking like an ALA/OIF
strongly worded letter or
press release may not be
recipe for success in your
neck of the woods.

Effective Keywords and Concepts: Center

- Access
- Equity
- Environment
- Choice
- Standards
- Social Justice
- Systemic Problems
- Class / Class Structure
- Microaggressions
- Privilege
- Inclusion
- Diversity

Effective Keywords and Concepts of Center Rights

- Fiscal Responsibility
- Families
- Morality
- Freedom / Liberty
- ROI
- Opportunity
- Guidelines
- Self-reliance
- Honoring vets & military
- Boost jobs/economy
- Serving rural America
- Local control



perceptions of book banning in the united states

some good news and insights into messaging!



Voter perceptions of book banning in the united states: Key Points and Messaging¹



The EveryLibrary Institute commissioned a public opinion poll of American voters to understand political support and opposition to book banning.

The poll, conducted by Embold Research, a nonpartisan research firm, surveyed 1,123 registered voters from August 31st-September 3rd with a margin of error of 3.4%. The survey looked at the differences in beliefs among voters segmented by age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, and 2020 presidential vote.

Download the report at:
everylibraryinstitute.org/bookbanpoll



Voter perceptions of book banning in the united states: Key Points and Messaging ¹¹



- Only **8% of voters** think “there are many books that are inappropriate and should be banned.”
- **Only 16%** think believe public school libraries include inappropriate books on their shelves.
- The latest American Family Survey indicates that **just 12% of Americans agree that books should be removed** from libraries if a parent objects.



Voter perceptions of book banning in the united states: Key Points and Messaging ₂



Common-sense messaging is most broadly effective. It is more effective than saying that proponents of book banning are simply afraid of anyone who is different from them, or bigoted, hateful, etc.



Voter perceptions of book banning in the united states: Key Points and Messaging ³



Libraries and librarians are broadly favorably viewed so libraries are entering this issue from a position of strength - American voters have a high regard for libraries, and certainly have **more affinity for libraries and librarians than they do for politicians.**



Voter perceptions of book banning in the united states: Key Points and Messaging ⁸

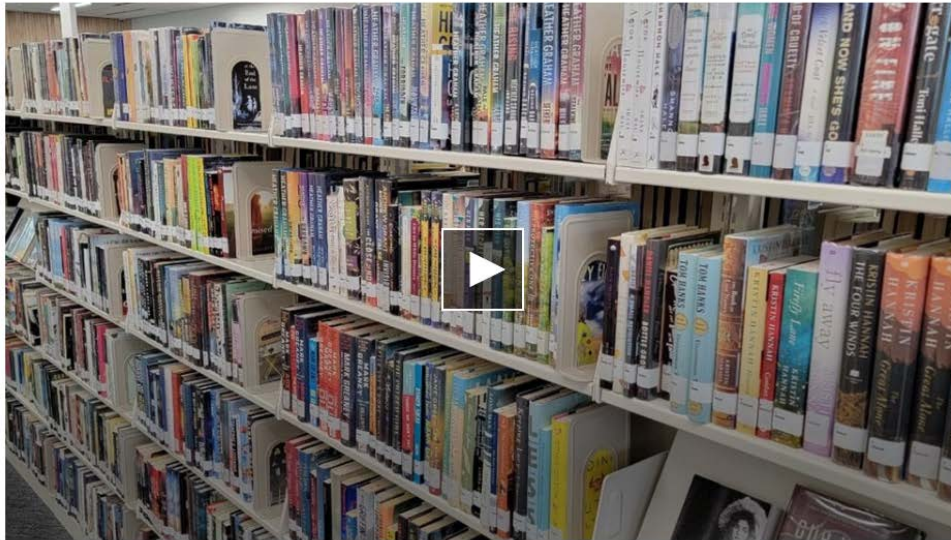


- Investigative reports show that small number of extremists are filing the bulk of challenges
- Parents overwhelmingly oppose book bans, and don't think there are problematic books on shelves, or that books should be pulled if parents object.
- They trust librarians, not politicians on this issue

Voter perceptions of book banning in the united states: Key Points and Messaging ⁸

Only small group of parents utilizing new law to help ban books in Utah school libraries

by Chris Jones, KUTV | Tue, December 6th 2022, 10:00 PM MST



FILE - Books in Alpine School District (Photo: Brian Morris/ KUTV)

- Of the 205 challenges, one married couple were behind 199 of them.
- Outside of Granite, only 35 parents have filed complaints against books, most of them in Davis County where UPU is headquartered.



Voter perceptions of book banning in the united states: Key Points and Messaging ⁸



The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Education Higher education Local Education Answer Sheet Jay Mathews

THE SCHOOL BOOK WARS

Objection to sexual, LGBTQ content propels spike in book challenges

An analysis of book challenges from across the nation shows the majority were filed by just 11 people

 By [Hannah Natanson](#)

Updated May 24, 2023 at 5:45 p.m. EDT | Published May 23, 2023 at 6:00 a.m. EDT



Voter perceptions of book banning in the united states: Key Points and Messaging ⁴

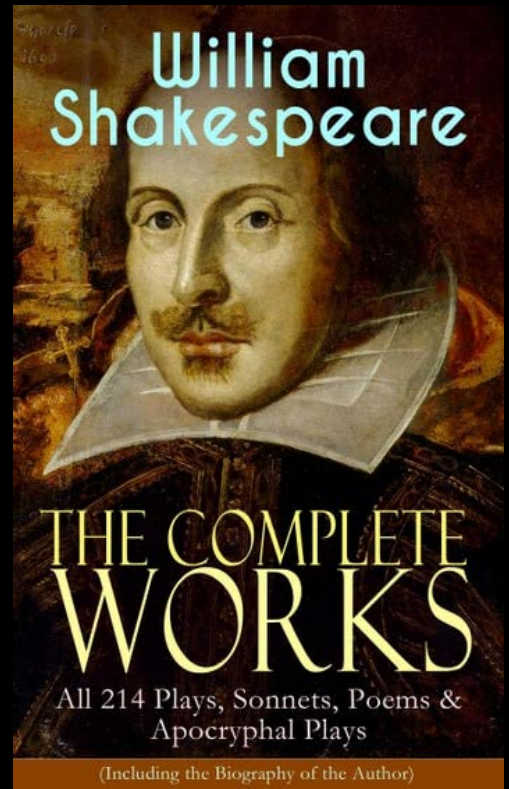
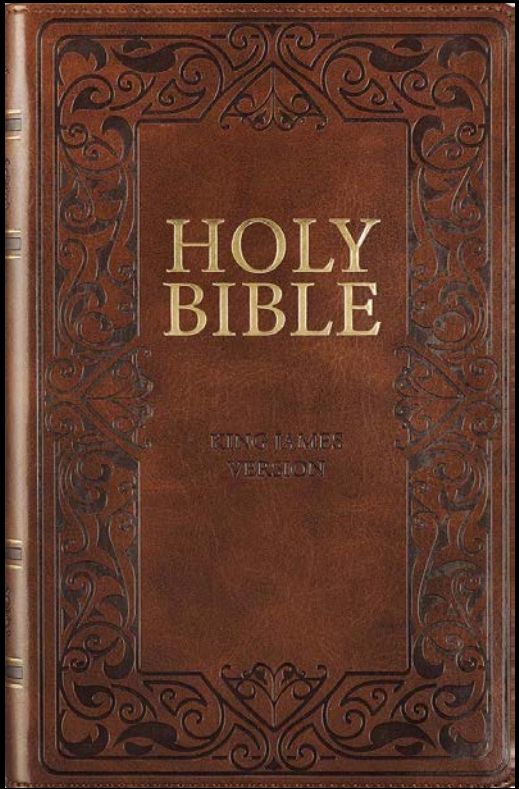
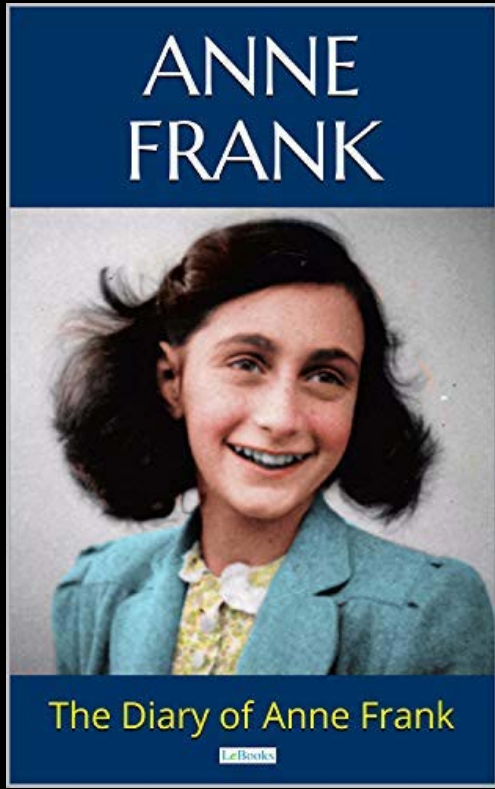


It is effective to make specific books emblematic of this issue as a whole. Of those tested, **it's most effective to highlight children's books and classic novels.**

Point out exactly which books will be pulled if proposed (or existing) policy or law is applied.

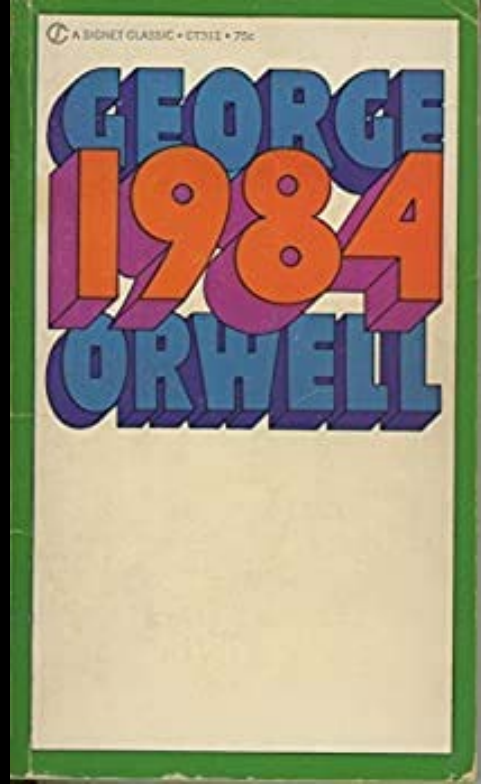
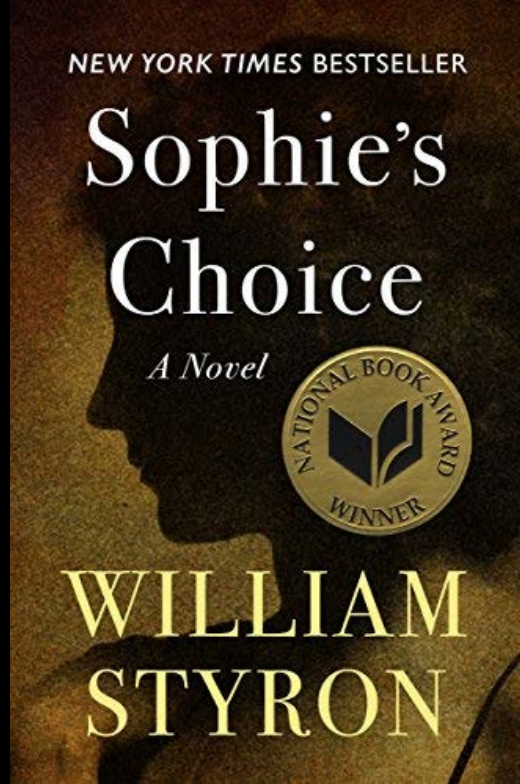
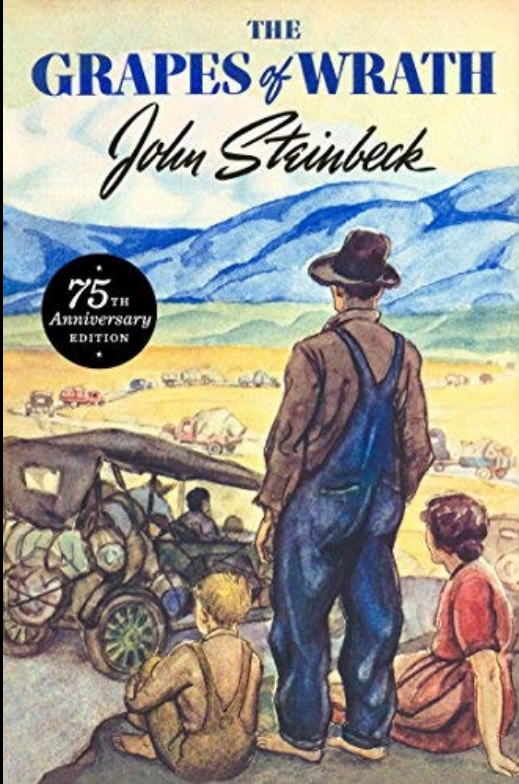


Voter perceptions of book banning in the united states: Key Points and Messaging ⁹

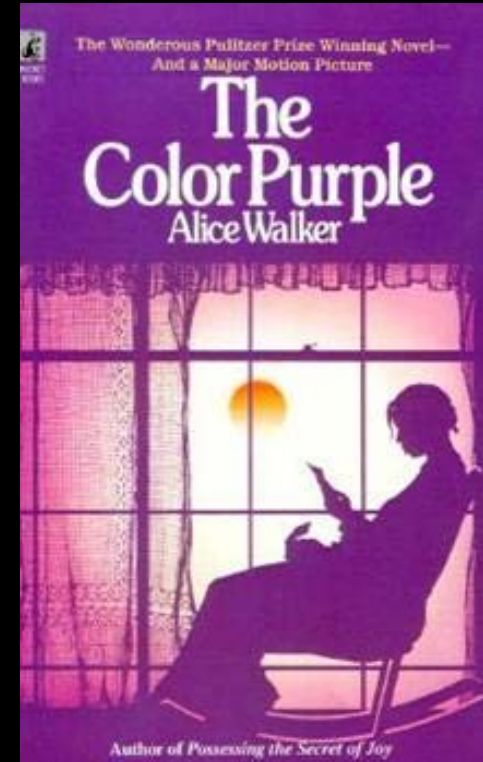
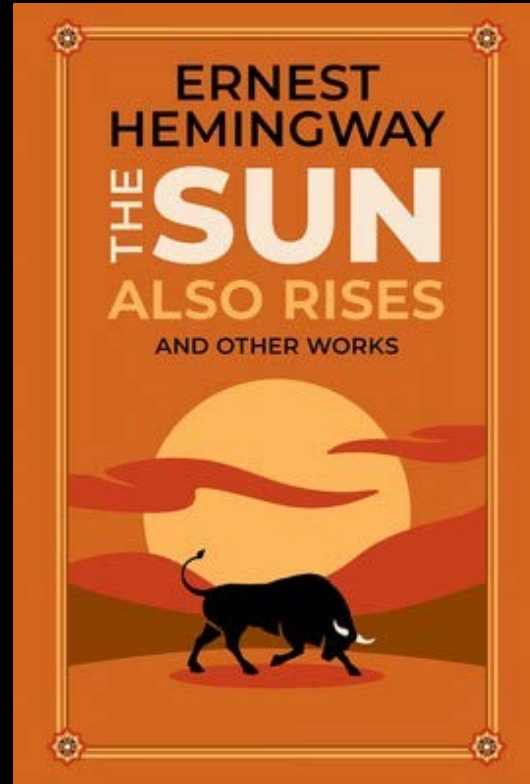
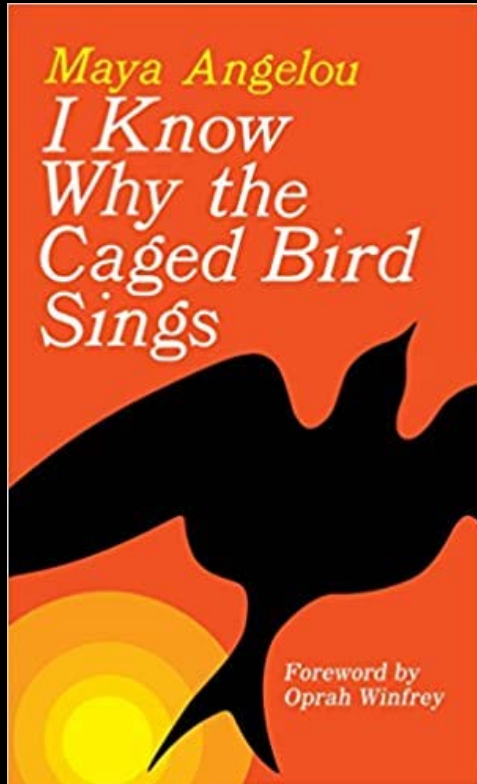




Voter perceptions of book banning in the united states: Key Points and Messaging ⁹



Voter perceptions of book banning in the united states: Key Points and Messaging ⁹





Voter perceptions of book banning in the united states: Key Points and Messaging ⁵



Voters are most offended by the idea that children and classic books are being banned

- Banning **classic novels** and **children's books** are **nearly universally opposed**
- Support for banning increases to 18% when discussing books that focus on race
- There is the **greatest support (34%) for banning books about sexuality**



Voter perceptions of book banning in the united states: Key Points and Messaging ⁶



Voters are receptive to describing politicians who support book banning as short-sighted

Voters are less likely to respond to accusations that book banners are “racist” or “homophobic”. So messaging to them on racism/homophobia will not be effective



Voter perceptions of book banning in the united states: Key Points and Messaging ⁷



The possibility of **charging library employees emerges as worrying** among Republicans and Independents.

We should talk about how this is happening around the country.

(UT, TX, RI, WY, FL, MI, WA, MO, etc.)



Monitoring State Legislation That Criminalizes Libraries, Schools, and Museums 2023

📅 APRIL 08, 2023

[HOME](#) / [NEWS AND UPDATES](#)

/ [MONITORING STATE LEGISLATION THAT CRIMINALIZES LIBRARIES, SCHOOLS, AND MUSEUMS 2023](#)

SHARE   

EveryLibrary is monitoring legislation during the 2023-2024 session that aims to change state obscenity and harmful to minors laws to allow for the prosecution of librarians, educators, college and university faculty, and museum professionals.

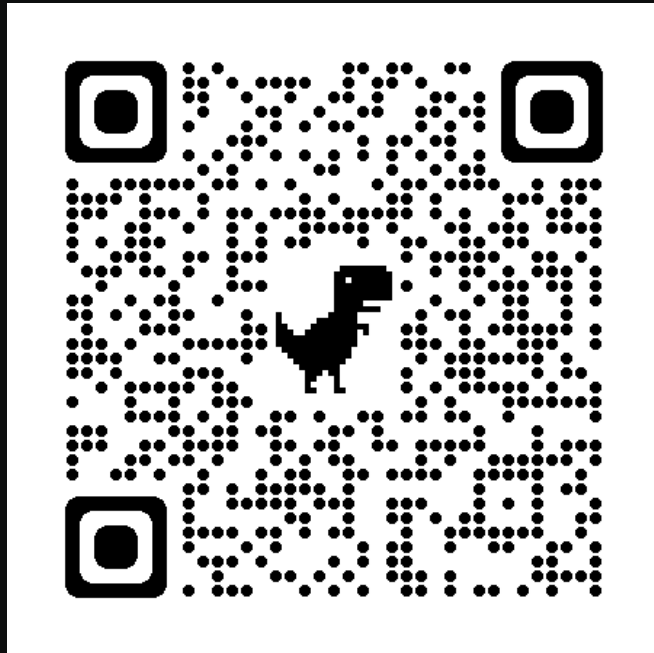
Through May 25, 2023, two states have passed bills that allow for the criminal prosecution of

Building Voter Support for Libraries in the United States

everylibrary.org/state_obscenity_laws_23-24

RESOURCES

bit.ly/realworldmessaging



Thank you!!
(see bonus slides that follow)



Bonus Slides






Effective Messaging

Affirm, don't oppose


Employ the "Yes, and..." technique



Responding to Challenges

Employ “Yes, And…”

Start by positively affirming the underlying value or concern that is being expressed. In book challenges, the underlying values/concerns tend to be: parental control; age-appropriate reading materials; child safety.




Responding to Challenges

Employ “Yes, And…”

EXAMPLE: These materials are not age-appropriate for my children and I don’t think they should be reading this smut.

- I hear that ensuring your age-appropriate materials is very important to you. Children develop at different rates, and parents have different standards for their children. To support the needs of all patrons, we group materials by age of intended audience, and provide many tools and one-on-one consults to help kids and empower parents to make informed reading choices that work for them.



Responding to Challenges

Employ “Yes, And…”

EXAMPLE: Well, I don't think anyone's kids should read these books because their pornographic.


- Thank you for sharing your concerns. I understand that what materials are available in the library is very important to you. I can provide you with a copy of our selection policy, and if you are still concerned that these materials fall outside of the scope of the policy we welcome you to initiate a request for reconsideration.

Responding to Challenges

Employ “Yes, And...”

EXAMPLE: Well, I don't think anyone's kids should read these books because their pornographic.

- I understand that you think these books are not appropriate for your children and can help you make acceptable selections for your child. And we extend that same respect for parental oversight to all parents, who can determine the guidance and level of freedom they want to give their children when choosing what to read.”



Responding to Challenges

Employ “Yes, And…”

EXAMPLE: These books are obscene and pornographic.

- I’m hearing that you don’t like the content of these books. I want to assure you that we don’t purchase materials from any publishers that publish materials that meet our state’s definitions of obscenity or pornography. I’m happy to help you find books that are more aligned with your interests and values.



Effective Messaging Techniques for Advocacy



Developing Effective Messaging

27 - 9 - 3

27

WORDS

9

SECONDS

3

POINTS



Developing Effective Messaging

EXAMPLE

Students are struggling with school

The library is helping our kids from slipping through the cracks

My staff and I are deeply committed to supporting kids, parents, and families.



Developing Effective Messaging

EXAMPLE

Our Main Street has struggled for years.

When libraries are renovated and expanded
downtowns are revitalized.

Our library draws thousands of people a month
to our downtown shopping area.



Advice From Elected Officials

From Awareness to Funding: A study of library support in America (OCLC 2008)

1. Stress the broad appeal of the library
2. Be proactive
3. Build strategic partnerships
4. Stress the library's ROI to the community



Advice From Elected Officials

From Awareness to Funding: A study of library support in America (OCLC 2008)

Stress the broad appeal of the library

The public library represents a safe, neutral topic on which an elected official could campaign or speak with broad appeal to nonpartisan audiences.

Advice From Elected Officials

From Awareness to Funding: A study of library support in America (OCLC 2008)

Stress the library's ROI to the community

(how we "stand in the gap")

Elected officials noted that the library's ROI is unique to a community and can change over time. This ranges from keeping children off the street, to education of residents leading to wealth creation for the community.

Officials also speak frequently of the universal and important role libraries play in providing

access to technology for the broader community.

Effective Messaging

Combining Data and Stories



Combining Stories/Data for Maximum Impact

People make decisions emotionally

Data alone will not persuade

Support for the library is **driven by emotion and belief** in the library's positive impact in the lives of community members.



Combining Stories/Data for Maximum Impact

DATA

We referred 37 people to VOA for housing assistance in the last quarter.



Combining Stories/Data for Maximum Impact

STORY

I'm writing in regard to one of your librarians to tell you a bit about how she helped my wife and I at a time when we were in **dire need and feeling extremely distraught**. I'm pretty sure that **if we hadn't met this sensitive librarian** compassionately acting beyond her duties to put us in touch with those who she hoped could help us that **we'd probably be dead**, considering the depth of our despair.

Combining Stories/Data for Maximum Impact

Story/Quote/photo → Data/Multiplier → Outcome



Harry and Gladys Smith
(Formerly homeless Library patrons)

Photo by [tango.mceffrie](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC 2.0](#)

"If we hadn't met this sensitive librarian we'd probably be dead. She helped at a time when we were in dire need and extremely distraught "

148 Housing Referrals in 2021

Supportive Housing helps people live and thrive in the community; **less likely to be incarcerated**; aids people with disabilities in getting **better healthcare**; and **help seniors stay in the community** as they age.

Source: [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#)

Combining Stories/Data for Maximum Impact

Story/Quote/photo → Data/Multiplier → Outcome



"My grandma takes me to the Library every week – I've read 127 books since I got my new card last year!"

+26,000

NEW CARDHOLDERS AFTER FINE FREE

Reading builds vocabulary which is a key indicator of future academic success

(Marzano & Pickering, 2005)



MAPPING YOUR COMMUNITY

Messaging the Library 102

- **Educational Stakeholders:** "Who else cares about education?"
- **Social Welfare or Faith-Based Stakeholders:** "Who else cares about the same populations?"
- **Governmental Stakeholders:** "Who Cares What Your Tax Rate is?"
- **Civic/Social/Arts Organization Stakeholders:** "Who Else Wants to Change the World a Bit?"
- **Business Stakeholders:** "Who Doesn't Always Know about how libraries support a healthy, thriving economy?"
- **Politicians and Local Elected officials:** "Who else has constituents and cares about the overall healthy functioning of the community?"
- **Formal/Informal Media and Social Networks:** "Who needs to hear it first?"



Politics and Advocacy

What is Advocacy?

We do X
(activity)

to

Bring about Y
(belief, attitude, feeling, action)

What is Advocacy?

In other words,
advocacy is all about

INFLUENCING OTHERS



Politics and Advocacy

One of your roles as a library board member is to influence others so that sufficient resources are allocated to the Library to ensure the provision of high quality, sustainable Library services.



Politics and Advocacy

Developing Relationships is key

IMPORTANT BECAUSE WE HAVE
NO POLITICAL POWER OR MONEY

**INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT IN OUR
POLARIZED POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT**

Why People Support Libraries

Why People Support Libraries

- Recognize the library's **importance to the community and to a child's education.**
- See the library as a **vital community resource** like public schools, fire and police.
- Hold the belief that the library is a **transformational force**
- **Not always heavy users of the library** but believe the library is a noble place, important and relevant to the community.

Source: [From Awareness to Funding: A Study of Library Support in America](#) (OCLC 2008)



Why People Support Libraries

Note: Support for the Library is **not about usage or features** (i.e. collections, programs, circ stats)

It is about **a belief in the institution**, and the **perceived benefit** to the **community as a whole**.



Why People Support Libraries

“Public perceptions of the librarian are highly related to support. **‘Passionate librarians’** who are involved in the community make a difference.”

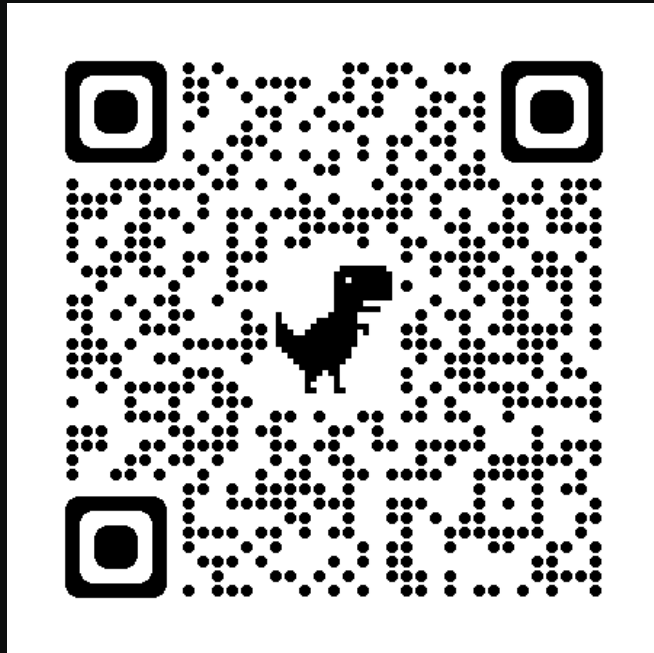
Therefore...

Speaking authentically and passionately

to other leaders and community members about the library's role in the community will help build support.

RESOURCES

bit.ly/realworldmessaging



Real World Policy and Messaging Issues From the Trenches

Practical advice on shoring up your policy
and messaging to defend against ~~stalking~~ ~~stalking~~



Library 2.0 Virtual Conference June 8, 2023

Banned Books and Censorship: Current
Intellectual Freedom Issues in the Library
Peter Bromberg | EveryLibrary | EveryLibrary.org