

having shelf control

Banning books limits students' world views



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One could argue there is nothing more American than our freedom of expression. Another could argue there is nothing more American than silencing stories of real, important matters.

To a certain extent, both of these points are true. We praise and every day use our beloved First Amendment rights and yet, according to "The New York Times" the amount of banned books in school districts over the United States gets worryingly higher each year.

Even though the topic has only recently picked up steam in the mainstream again, book banning and challenging has been around for over a century. Although we don't burn books (as much) anymore, trying to censor stories that people deem inappropriate is nothing new.

On the surface, banning a few certain books might seem harmless. It's valid that parents wouldn't want their kids reading about ideologies that they themselves strongly disagree with. There are some dicier subjects that should obviously be kept out of classrooms and schools for younger students.

However, these "dicier" subjects are still important. When books are banned for having "inappropriate" material, the question of "where is that line drawn?" arises.

Is a book too inappropriate when

The Library Association recorded 1,597 books that were challenged in 2021, the highest number since the organization began tracking bans 20 years ago.

it discusses the appalling and often racist parts of American history? Too inappropriate when it stars a protagonist who strays from our norm of how someone should be? Too inappropriate when it includes actions or words we don't all necessarily approve of? According to many parents, it is.

When we ban books for these reasons, it takes away valuable learning resources and opportunities. Books are a vital way to learn about previously unknown ideas and experiences in a way that allows us to see them in a multidimensional view.

On top of that, these bans tell children these topics are forbidden and that there is not a situation where reading about these things should be permitted.

It denies the very real history that still impacts people today.

It tells children that something about who they are is inherently wrong, that it is something that should be hidden and repressed.

It silences anything that doesn't confine to a limited viewpoint of a certain group of people, especially in the smaller, more conservative areas where books are most frequently banned and children probably won't get many diverse interactions.

Banning books with the intention of protecting children really just hides the full picture, which is filled with different people and perspectives. It has been said many times that books are a portal into other worlds.

What is often forgotten is that books are a mirror of ours, only if we allow ourselves to look in.

In 2022, across the country, restrictions occurred in 138 districts enrolled with nearly 4 million students.

|| INFO FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES

In 2022, there have been attempts to ban or restrict 1,651 books.

