

ALA
American
Library
Association



**Unite
Against
Book Bans**

UNITE AGAINST BOOK BANS

TOOLKIT

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your support of the UABB campaign. The American Library Association and UABB partner organizations trust individuals to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We must protect the rights of everyone to access a variety of books – in libraries and elsewhere.

To help you amplify and support this campaign, we have prepared the following toolkit for your organization's and your individual use. In addition to

downloading and using the materials in this toolkit, we encourage you to visit and sign up at our website at www.UniteAgainstBookBans.org. We also encourage you to follow our social media handles on Facebook ([Facebook.com/UniteAgainstBookBans](https://www.facebook.com/UniteAgainstBookBans)), Twitter ([@UABookBans](https://twitter.com/UABookBans)), and Instagram ([@UniteAgainstBookBans](https://www.instagram.com/UniteAgainstBookBans)), as well as to share, retweet, like, and use the [#UniteAgainstBookBans](https://twitter.com/UniteAgainstBookBans) hashtag in your own social media posts.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

ALA
American
Library
Association

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HOW TO TALK ABOUT BOOK BANS

HOW TO TALK ABOUT BOOK BANS

On the following slide are a set of talking points which should be customized to reflect your own voice. These can be tailored to talk about a specific book that is being challenged or used more generally to oppose book bans. The points can be used for writing a letter to your local school or library board, your state legislators and governor, or as the basis of your public comments given to any elected bodies. They can also be used to help you draft a letter to the editor of your local newspaper or in speaking with members of the media. All of these actions are important ways you can help have an impact on the issue of book bans.



HOW TO TALK ABOUT BOOK BANS

- **READING** is a foundational skill, critical to future learning, and to exercising our democratic freedoms.
- **WE CAN TRUST** individuals to make their own decisions about what they read and believe.
- **PARENTS HAVE THE RIGHT** to guide their children's reading and education, but parents should not be making decisions for other parents' children. A small group of parents should not dictate what books other people's children are allowed to read.
- **BOOKS ARE TOOLS** for understanding complex issues. Limiting young people's access to books does not protect them from life's complex and challenging issues.
- **YOUNG PEOPLE** deserve to see themselves reflected in a library's books.
- **REMOVING AND BANNING BOOKS** from public libraries is a slippery slope to government censorship and the erosion of our country's commitment to freedom of expression.
- **PLEASE REJECT** any efforts to ban books and allow individuals and parents to make the decision about what they can read and believe.
- **VISIT** UniteAgainstBookBans.org to learn more and to join our efforts.

CONTACT ELECTED OFFICIALS AND MEDIA

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Why should I contact my elected officials?

Public input is very important for school and library board members, trustees, and state legislators. In many localities, these are elected positions, or appointments made by elected officials. Many local elected officials serve in either 2- or 4-year terms. These elected officials, therefore, take the views of residents and voters seriously, and seek to represent the voices of their community.

Unfortunately, attempts to ban books from libraries are rising at an unprecedented level across the country, as a vocal minority is currently dominating the conversation. That's why it's crucial that the members of your school and library boards and the elected officials in your community and state hear from individuals like you who are united against book bans.

In many states, local municipalities and counties, there are active efforts to ban specific books at schools and libraries. If you are aware of an attempted ban in your local school or public library, reach out to your local librarians and ask how you can support them.

On both sides of the aisle, large majorities of voters and parents oppose book bans.



CONTACT ELECTED OFFICIALS AND MEDIA

How do I contact these officials?

To identify who sits on your local school or library board, search online for your municipality's or county's name and "school board" or "library board." From there, most websites will include the email address and/or other contact information for each of the board members, as well as a general email account for the board. You may alternatively seek to call your local library or school to ask for the contact information of these officials. We recommend that you include all of the members of the board in the email or letter that you submit.

Many state legislatures also provide an online search tool to identify who your state senator(s) and state representative(s)/delegate(s) are based on your address. [Click this link to find information for your state legislature.](#)

Use the talking points provided in this toolkit to customize your message to these elected officials. Your letter or comments will be strongest if you are succinct, while also

demonstrating your concern over book banning efforts and your connection to this issue (i.e. as a parent, as a student, as an educator, as a local business owner, as an engaged community member, as a librarian, as a reader, etc.).

You may also choose to attend your next school board or library board meeting to speak against book bans. Most websites of these local boards will include the agendas of upcoming meetings where public comment is allowed. Note that public comments during these meetings are usually limited to 2-3 minutes per speaker, so keep your remarks brief and to the point. Please remember to be respectful and refrain from making ad hominem or personal attacks against anyone who disagrees with you.

CONTACT ELECTED OFFICIALS AND MEDIA

How do I write a letter to the editor of a newspaper?

Writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper is another way to have an impact on the conversation around book bans. Search online for the name of your local newspaper along with “submit a letter to the editor.” Those instructions should provide you with an email address, mailing address, or a web form where you can submit your letter.

Note that most newspapers will limit the length of letters they choose to publish. Typically those limits are approximately 200-300 words. When you submit your letter, be sure to include your full name, town where you reside, email address, telephone number, and any other required information from the publication.

Share your progress

Once you’ve taken these steps, share your work with others! Be sure to tag [#UniteAgainstBookBans](#) on social media or email to UniteAgainstBookBans@ala.org to let us know what actions you have taken!

PETITION DECISION MAKERS

PETITION DECISION MAKERS

If a book challenge or attempted ban occurs in your community, one way to demonstrate widespread opposition to removal of that book is to petition the person or group that is responsible for deciding whether the book will stay on the shelves. This can be a school administrator or board, a library board, a town council, etc.

It's important to note that petitions alone are generally not enough to change the minds of decision makers. When combined with other activities, however, they can be powerful in demonstrating wide support for (or opposition to) a particular issue and growing your base of advocates.



PETITION DECISION MAKERS

Here's how to create, circulate, and successfully deliver a petition:

- Identify the decision maker(s) and address the petition to that/those person(s).
- Keep your statement short, factual, and end with a specific request for action, e.g., We urge you to keep [title of book] in the library's collection.
- If filing a paper petition, include your statement at the top of each page. Clearly state your concern and what you would like decision makers to do.
- Make sure that there is adequate space to sign.
- Include fields of information to show that the signer is a constituent of the petition recipient(s). This can be a zip code, address, town, school district, etc.
- Focus on collecting signatures from the constituents of the targeted decision makers. It can be harmful to your cause if the majority of voices are from a different community.
- Allow for 10 signature lines per page; this will make it easier to tally the number of collected signatures.
- Plan your signature gathering and ask others to assist in collecting signatures.
- For paper petitions, set up in high traffic areas, e.g., near grocery stores, public transportation stops, or in front of public buildings. Use signage to identify your cause. Consider hosting multiple events at different times of day.
- For online petitions, use email and social media to reach large numbers of supporters.
- A large number of signatures is necessary for impact. Set a goal based on the size of the constituency.
- Consider timing. Deliver the petition before a decision is made. Set an internal deadline of at least 3-5 days prior to the anticipated decision to allow for any logistical delays and for your delivery of the petitions to have the strongest impact.
- There are many online tools that can make creating a petition easy, e.g., Change.org. Keep in mind, however, that it is most effective to deliver a petition to the decision makers in person, at a public event, with physical copies of your petition.
- Let the local press know that you will be presenting a petition. Have a copy of your statement ready to share with them. Notify the press the day before you plan to deliver the petitions and again on the morning of your delivery.
- Bring a group of supporters to join you. Identify your spokesperson and make a statement as you present the petition. Make a copy of the original document before presenting it.

CONNECT WITH OTHERS & SPREAD THE WORD

CONNECT WITH OTHERS & SPREAD THE WORD

This can be a difficult issue to work on alone, so encourage other organizations, friends, and family to get involved. Research shows that opposition to book bans is widespread and you will likely find support within your community to unite against such efforts.

Consider all of your networks and connections to your community. The talking points above can be used to have one-on-one or group conversations with organizations you belong to – parent organizations, civic groups, faith communities, book clubs, non-profits, sports leagues, and more. If you represent an organization, contact other organizations that might work in coalition with you.

Encourage fellow supporters to sign up with the Unite Against Book Bans campaign and to take the steps outlined in this toolkit - join; share; speak out; attend meetings in groups; start an email thread or private chat for your group; and build your group as you go.



EMAIL/NEWSLETTER COPY

EMAIL/NEWSLETTER COPY

Here is suggested language that organizations can use in their regular emails or newsletters to their members (internal or external). We encourage groups to customize the language below based on your/their organization's voice and style. The most important element to include below is the website URL and social media hashtag, [#UniteAgainstBookBans](https://www.UniteAgainstBookBans.org).

Announcing Unite Against Book Bans

Our friends at the American Library Association (ALA) are organizing a public campaign called Unite Against Book Bans to protect the rights of everyone to access a variety of books. Like the ALA and the campaign's partner organizations, we trust individuals to make their own decisions about what they read and believe.

While a large majority of Americans are opposed to book bans, efforts to ban books, especially in schools and libraries, are rising at an unprecedented level across the country. The goal for the Unite Against Book Bans campaign is to harness the energy of the large majority of Americans that oppose book bans and empower them to use their voice in the public arena to stop these efforts.

How You Can Help

As a first step, we encourage you to join the campaign: www.UniteAgainstBookBans.org. Once you've signed up, we encourage you to write to your local school and/or library board to oppose book bans. Use the talking points we've provided (enclose the talking points within this toolkit).

You can also help spread the word to your friends and family. To help amplify this campaign, we have enclosed sample social media posts, graphics, and the [#UniteAgainstBookBans](https://www.UniteAgainstBookBans.org) hashtag to use.

We also encourage you to follow its socialmedia handles on Facebook (Facebook.com/UniteAgainstBookBans), Twitter ([@UABookBans](https://twitter.com/UABookBans)), and Instagram ([@UniteAgainstBookBans](https://www.instagram.com/UniteAgainstBookBans)), as well as to like, retweet, and share their content.

Next Steps

Over the following weeks and months, we'll work to mobilize individuals and organizations from across party lines to unite against book bans. This fight is too big for any single group or person to forge alone, so we're grateful to have your support.

If you have any questions, please reach out to [\(name, email of your organization's primary contact\)](#).

SHARE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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The following are draft graphics and posts you can use on your own social media channels. Please feel free to edit these posts as needed to make them feel authentic to your organization and the communities you work with.

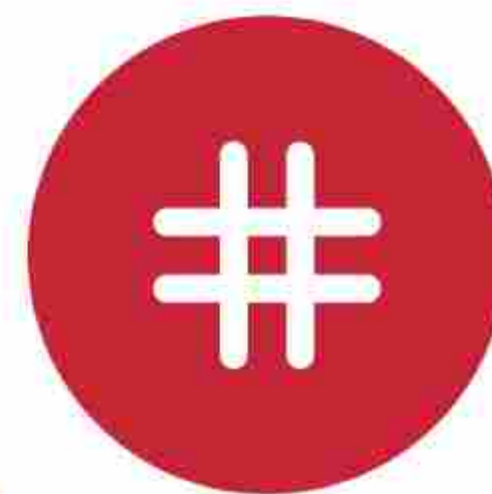


FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



SHARE YOUR POSTS

Share posts from our pages directly to your own to easily spread the campaign message to your followers on a regular basis



CREATE YOUR OWN POSTS

*Remember to tag us and use the hashtag
#UniteAgainstBookBans*

SOCIAL GRAPHIC 1

SOCIAL COPY

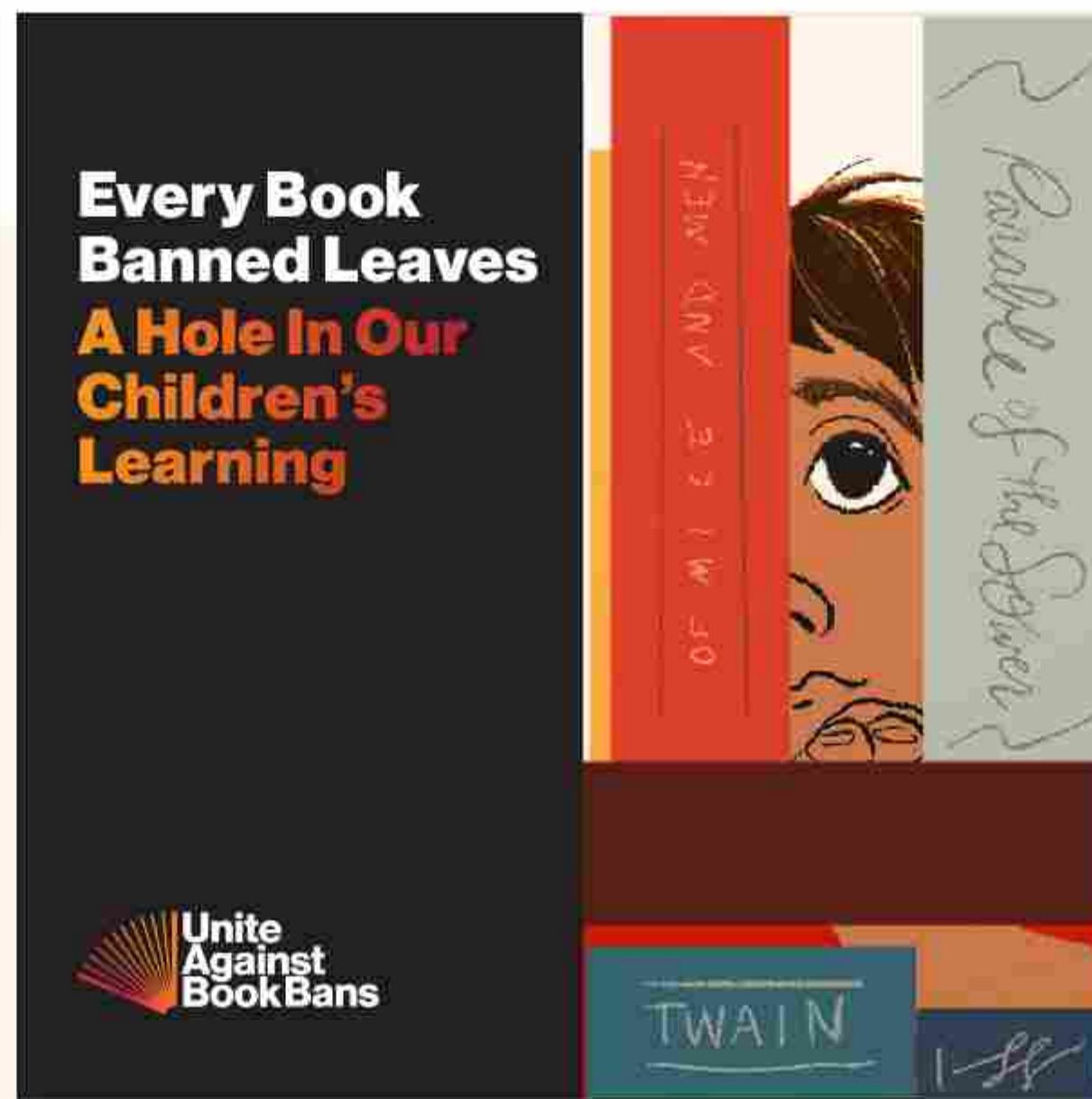
Join Us: UniteAgainstBookBans.org. Follow: @UniteAgainstBookBans. #UniteAgainstBookBans



Facebook/Twitter (1200px x 628px)



Organic Post (1024px x 550px)



Instagram Post (1080px x 1080px)



Instagram Story (1080px x 1920px)

Download Set →

SOCIAL GRAPHIC 2A

SOCIAL COPY

Sign up at UniteAgainstBookBans.org #UniteAgainstBookBans @UniteAgainstBookBans



Facebook/Twitter (1200px x 628px)



Organic Post (1024px x 550px)



Instagram Post (1080px x 1080px)



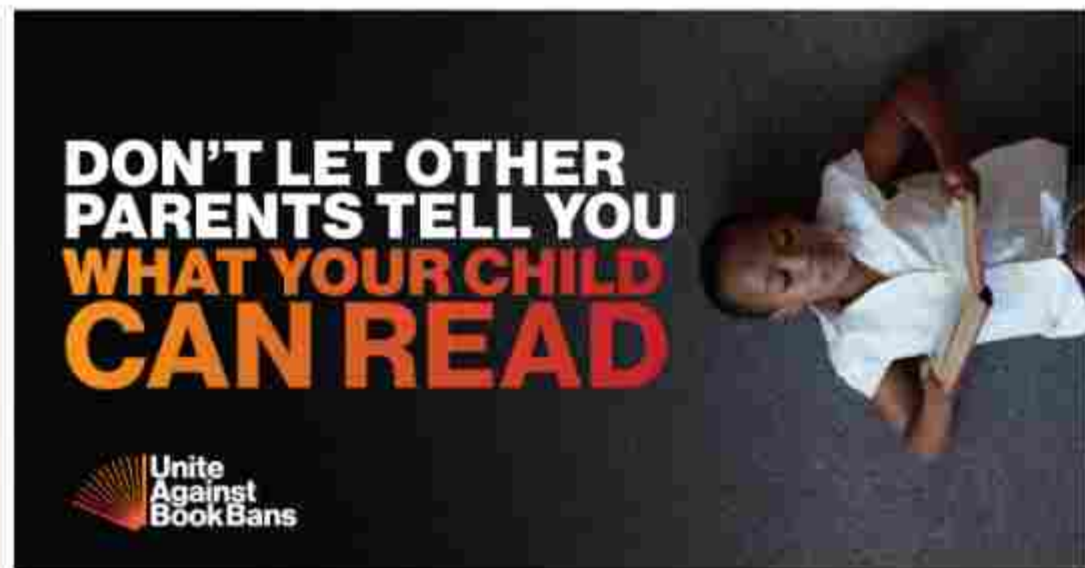
Instagram Story (1080px x 1920px)

Download Set →

SOCIAL GRAPHIC 2B

SOCIAL COPY

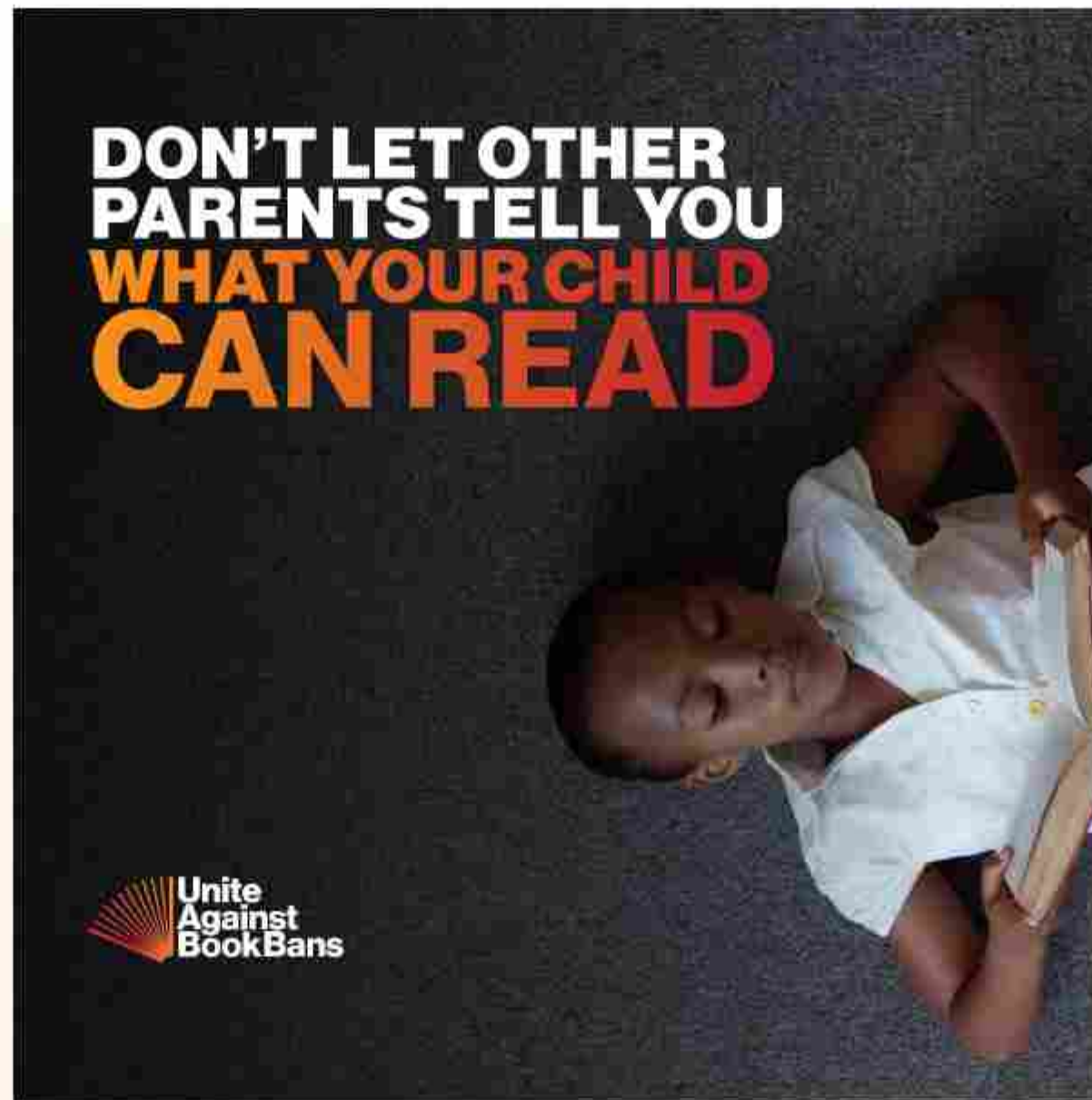
Sign up at UniteAgainstBookBans.org #UniteAgainstBookBans @UniteAgainstBookBans



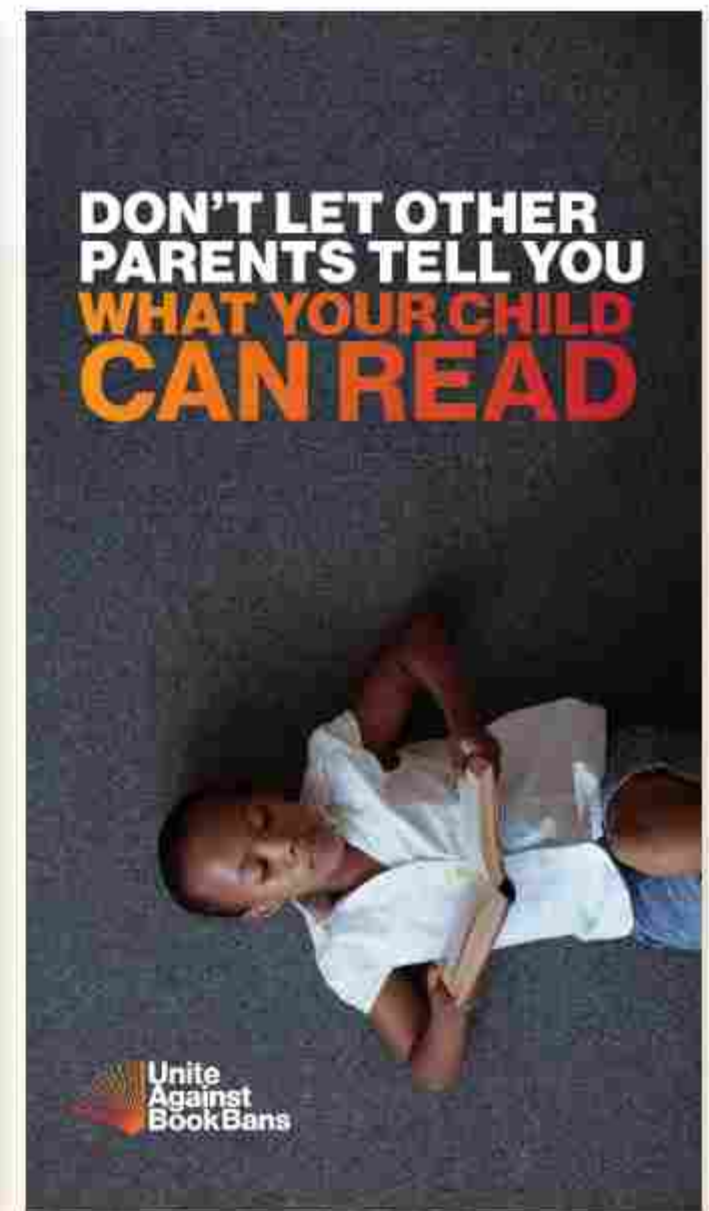
Facebook/Twitter (1200px x 628px)



Organic Post (1024px x 550px)



Instagram Post (1080px x 1080px)



Instagram Story (1080px x 1920px)

[Download Set →](#)

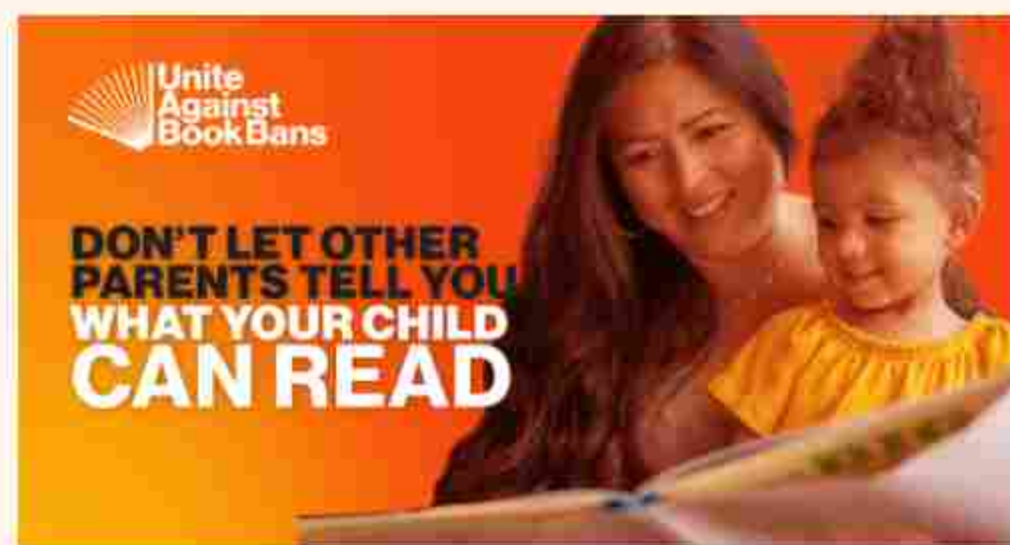
SOCIAL GRAPHIC 2C

SOCIAL COPY

Sign up at UniteAgainstBookBans.org #UniteAgainstBookBans @UniteAgainstBookBans



Facebook/Twitter (1200px x 628px)



Organic Post (1024px x 550px)



Instagram Post (1080px x 1080px)



Instagram Story (1080px x 1920px)

[Download Set →](#)

SOCIAL GRAPHIC 3A

SOCIAL COPY

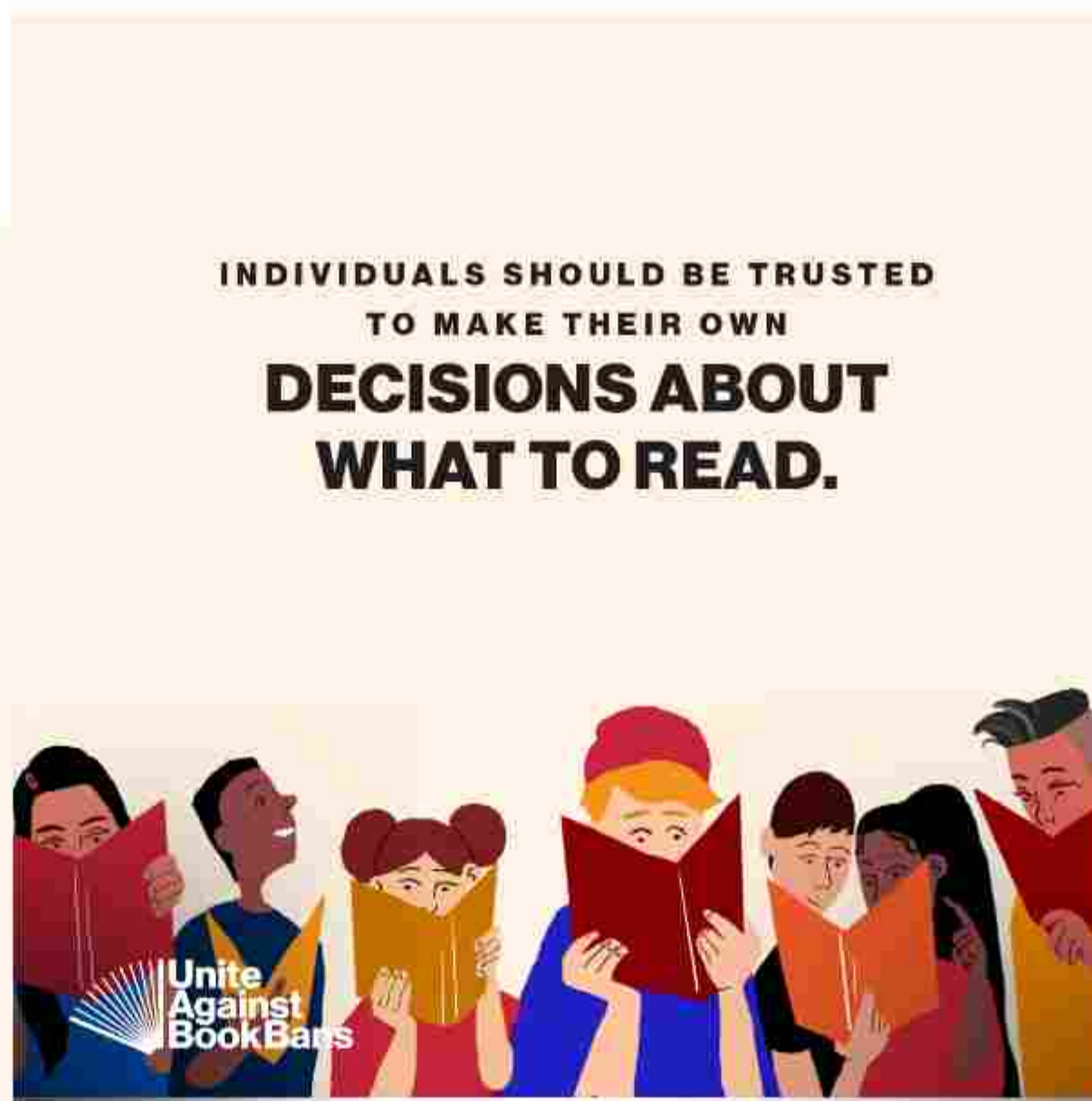
Librarians respect each person's right to read what they want, but not to dictate what other people's children read. Join us: UniteAgainstBookBans.org #UniteAgainstBookBans #FReadom



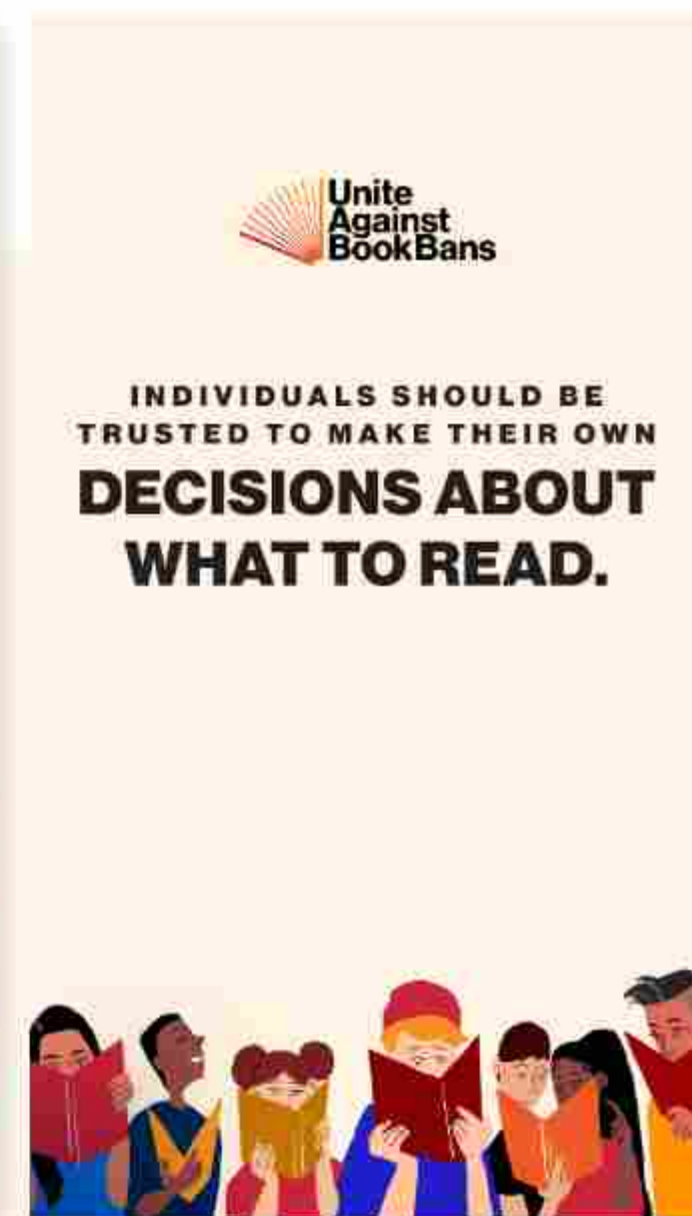
Facebook/Twitter (1200px x 628px)



Organic Post (1024px x 550px)



Instagram Post (1080px x 1080px)



Instagram Story (1080px x 1920px)

Download Set →

SOCIAL GRAPHIC 3B

SOCIAL COPY

Librarians respect each person's right to read what they want, but not to dictate what other people's children read. Join us: UniteAgainstBookBans.org #UniteAgainstBookBans #FReadom



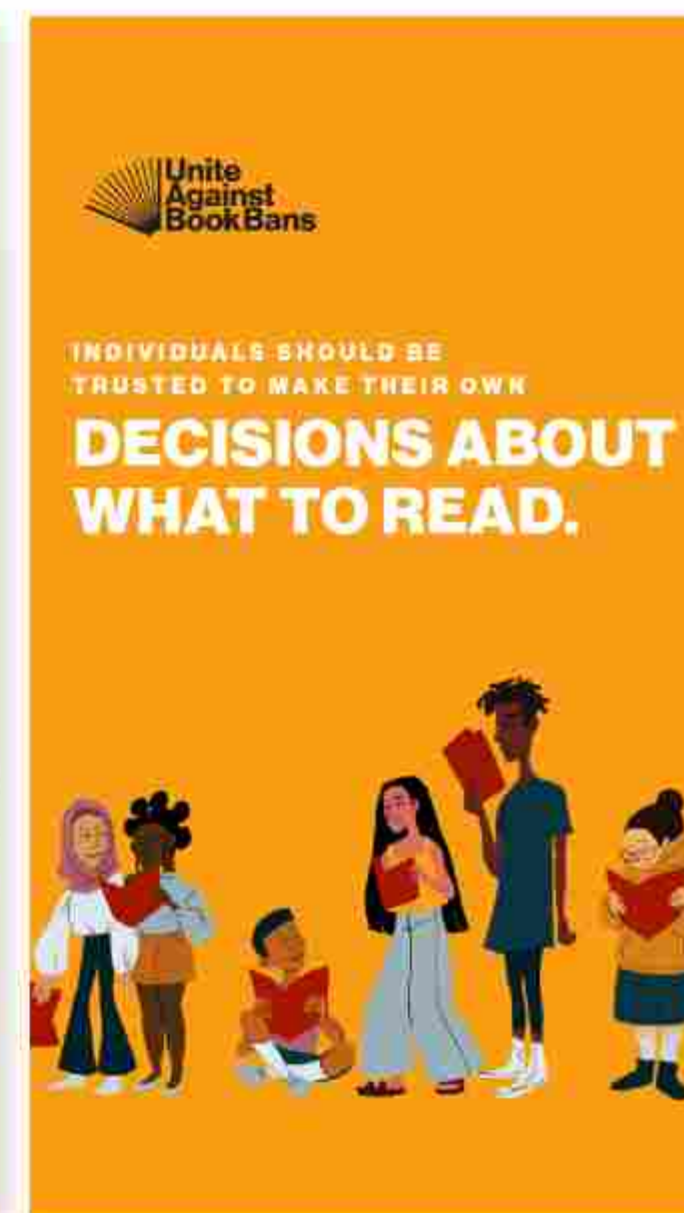
Facebook/Twitter (1200px x 628px)



Organic Post (1024px x 550px)



Instagram Post (1080px x 1080px)



Instagram Story (1080px x 1920px)

Download Set →

SOCIAL GRAPHIC 4

SOCIAL COPY

I'm a (insert your own connection/title, i.e. parent, librarian, etc.) and I unite with others against book bans. Join: UniteAgainstBookBans.org #UniteAgainstBookBans



Facebook/Twitter (1920px x 1080px)

Moms
Unite
Against
Book Bans

Instagram Post (1080px x 1080px)



Instagram Story (1080px x 1920px)

Download Set →

FAQ

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: How do I handle difficult conversations with individuals seeking to ban books, especially parents concerned about what their kids are reading?

A: We must trust individuals to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We also believe that parents have the right to guide their children's reading and education. At the same time, individuals should not be making decisions for other readers or for other parents' children. Specifically, a small group of parents should not dictate what books other people's children are allowed to read.

Q: What if someone says that children are too young to begin reading a book that addresses sexually explicit topics?

A: We recognize that there will be disagreements over certain content. However, individuals should not be making decisions for other readers or for other parents about what is appropriate.

Services, materials, and facilities that fulfill the needs and interests of library users at different stages in their personal development are a necessary part of providing library services and should be determined on an individual basis.

Reading materials available in the library are available to students for personal selection; they are not required books. Banning these materials will remove access for all members of the community.

Q: What if someone argues that they don't want their children being taught political views that they find objectionable, such as critical race theory?

A: School educators and librarians are professionals who are trained to not impose their own thoughts and opinions on which ideas are right, but to make knowledge and ideas available so that people have the freedom to choose what to read. Further, librarians and educators respect the rights of parents to decide which books their children are exposed to. They work closely with parents to help them decide the best books for their children.

Libraries provide access to books that offer teachable moments for readers of all ages and expand our understanding of people with different backgrounds, ideas, and beliefs.

PRINT COLLATERAL

BOOKMARK



[Download Bookmark](#) →

CONTACT US

For additional resources from the American Library Association in responding to book bans and censorship efforts, click [here](#). If you need additional support, please contact:

American Library Association

Office for Intellectual Freedom

oif@ala.org or ala.org/challengereporting

THANK YOU
