



Silencing LGBTQIA+ Voices

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The United States has been in a book-banning crisis for the past three years. According to the American Library Association, in 2021 there were 1,858 titles targeted; in 2022, 2,571 titles; and in 2023, 4,240 unique titles were challenged (American Library Association 2024). This is the highest number of titles targeted since the ALA began collecting this information 20 years ago. In 2010, former Office for Intellectual Freedom Director Barbara Jones estimated that only 75–80 percent of challenges are reported. It is almost impossible to know, for example, if books aren't purchased for collections because they might provoke controversy ("Campaign Urges Book Challenge Reporting" 2011). Following the pattern of the past two years, almost all of the top ten challenged titles in 2023 were diverse books. Seven of the books focus on LGBTQIA+ content or have LGBTQIA+ characters.

The three research articles in this issue all focus on barriers to accessing these materials. This was not intended to be a special issue on this topic, but given how many of LGBTQIA+ titles are targeted, it is not surprising that the journal received several articles tacking this topic. The first article provides a history of censorship of LGBTQIA+ materials for children. The second demonstrates that, at the moment, LGBTQIA+ content is not blocked by CIPA-compliant filers. However, given the current political

climate, this could change any time. Finally, the last article analyzes the Moms for Liberty–endorsed BookLooks.org reviews of Stonewall Book Award–winning titles.

The current crisis has also led to a backlog in the journal's news coverage. It is imperative to have a written record of this challenging time for libraries, library workers, schools, teachers, and their allies. News will return to the journal in the next volume.

References

American Library Association. 2023. "American Library Association Reports Record Number of Unique Book Titles Challenged in 2023." Press release, March 1. <https://www.ala.org/news/2024/03/american-library-association-reports-record-number-unique-book-titles>.

"Campaign Urges Book Challenge Reporting." 2011. *American Libraries* 42 (11/12): 13.