

Book ban attempts reach "unparalleled" 20-year high in 2022

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Attempted book bans in 2022 nearly doubled [from 2021](#), hitting an "unparalleled" 20-year record, according to new data from the [American Library Association \(ALA\)](#).

Why it matters: There were more than 1,250 book challenges at school and public libraries in 2022, suggesting that the [recent surge](#) in attempted book bans is not abating.

By the numbers: A total of 2,571 unique book titles were targeted for censorship in 2022, up 38% from 2021.

- A vast majority of the targeted books were written by or were about members of the LGBTQ community and people of color, according to the ALA.
- 58% of censorship attempts were directed at books and materials in school libraries, classroom libraries or school curricula, while 41% of them targeted materials in public libraries.
- The organization said that 90% of individual challenges involved multiple books at a time.

The big picture: ALA said the skyrocketing number of challenges is in part the result of the use of book lists compiled by censorship groups.

- Prior to 2021, most challenges involved a single book.

What they're saying: "Overwhelmingly, we're seeing these challenges come from organized censorship groups that target local library board meetings to demand removal of a long list of books they share on social media," Deborah Caldwell-Stone, an ALA director, said in a statement.

- "Each attempt to ban a book by one of these groups represents a direct attack on every person's constitutionally protected right to freely choose what books to read and what ideas to explore," Caldwell-Stone said.
- "The choice of what to read must be left to the reader or, in the case of children, to parents. That choice does not belong to self-appointed book police."