

Ban the Bans

Written by Jeff Smith, State Senator District 31
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<http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/movie-to-kill-a-mockingbird-s447.png>



Sen. Smith discusses the dangers of censorship and the vital importance of libraries to the cause of intellectual freedom.

MADISON - “To Kill A Mockingbird” by Harper Lee. “The Handmaid’s Tale” by Margaret Atwood. “Fahrenheit 451” by Ray Bradbury. All titles you may remember from a high school literature syllabus. Yet each of these books have been banned – and in some cases, burned – in the United States.

In October we commemorated Banned Books Week, amidst an increase in attempts at banning books across the nation. In places like Menomonee Falls, certain books have been challenged as being inappropriate and therefore unworthy of inclusion in the library’s catalog. This year, the American Library Association (ALA) has recorded 26 attempts to ban books in Wisconsin and attempts to censor more than 1,900 titles nationwide. This is the highest number of books since they first started collecting data twenty years ago.

This coincides with state legislatures attempting to restrict access to materials across the country. Right here in Wisconsin, a bill was recently circulated for co-sponsorship to require school libraries and public libraries disclose to parents and guardians within 24 hours a list of the materials their child has checked out from the library.

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