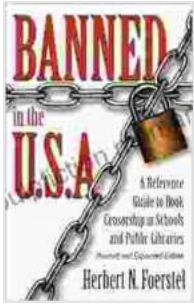# The Ultimate Reference Guide to Censorship in Schools and Public Libraries (Revised and Updated)

Censorship is the suppression of ideas and information that someone else finds objectionable. It can take many forms, including banning books, removing materials from library shelves, and filtering internet access. Censorship is often justified in the name of protecting children or society from harmful content. However, it can also be used to silence dissenting voices and prevent people from accessing important information.

Censorship in schools and public libraries is a particularly troubling issue. These institutions are supposed to be places where people can learn and grow. However, when censorship is present, it can create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. Students and library patrons may be afraid to read or discuss certain topics. This can have a chilling effect on free speech and intellectual inquiry.

The purpose of this guide is to provide an overview of censorship in schools and public libraries. It will discuss the history of censorship, the methods used to censor content, and the impact of censorship on students and library patrons. The guide will also provide practical strategies for challenging censorship and protecting the freedom to read for all.

Banned in the U.S.A.: A Reference Guide to Book Censorship in Schools and Public Libraries: A Reference Guide to Book Censorship in Schools and

Public Libraries--Revised and Expanded Edition

by Herbert N. Foerstel

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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Censorship has a long and ugly history in schools and public libraries. In the United States, the first book ban was enacted in 1647. The book, "The Quaker's Catechism," was banned by the Massachusetts Bay Colony because it was considered to be heretical.

In the 19th century, censorship was used to suppress books that dealt with controversial topics such as sex, religion, and politics. In the early 20th century, censorship was used to target books that were considered to be un-American. During the McCarthy era, many books were banned from schools and libraries because they were suspected of containing communist propaganda.

Censorship continues to be a problem in schools and public libraries today. In recent years, there have been a number of high-profile cases of books being banned or challenged. These cases have often been driven by religious or political objections to the content of the books.

There are a variety of methods that can be used to censor content in schools and public libraries. These methods include:

- **Book bans:** A book ban is an official order that prohibits a book from being read or distributed. Book bans can be enacted by school boards, library boards, or other government agencies.

- **Removal from library shelves:** Materials can also be removed from library shelves without a formal ban. This can be done by library staff or by individuals who pressure librarians to remove the materials.

- **Internet filtering:** Internet filtering is used to block access to certain websites and content. Internet filtering can be used in schools and public libraries to prevent students and library patrons from accessing materials that are considered to be harmful or inappropriate.

Censorship can have a devastating impact on students and library patrons. It can:

- **Create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation:** Censorship can create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation in schools and libraries. Students and library patrons may be afraid to read or discuss certain topics. This can have a chilling effect on free speech and intellectual inquiry.

- **Limit access to important information:** Censorship can limit access to important information. Students and library patrons may be unable to access books and other materials that they need for their education and personal growth.

- **Undermine the freedom to read:** Censorship can undermine the freedom to read. The freedom to read is a fundamental right that is protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Censorship
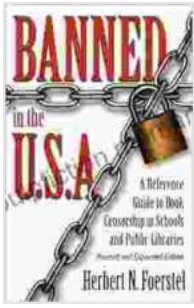
violates this right by preventing people from accessing the information and ideas that they need and want.

There are a number of things that you can do to challenge censorship in schools and public libraries. These include:

- **Speak out against censorship:** If you see censorship happening, speak out against it. Contact your school board or library board and express your concerns.

- **Support organizations that fight censorship:** There are a number of organizations that are fighting to protect the freedom to read. You can support these organizations by donating money, volunteering your time, or spreading the word about their work.

- **Read banned books:** One of the best ways to challenge censorship is to read banned books. When you read a banned book, you are sending a message that you will not be silenced.

Censorship is a serious problem that can have a devastating impact on students and library patrons. However, there are a number of things that you can do to challenge censorship and protect the freedom to read for all. By speaking out against censorship, supporting organizations that fight censorship, and reading banned books, you can help to create a more open and tolerant society.

- [American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom](#)

- [National Coalition Against Censorship](#)

- [Freedom to Read Foundation](#)

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