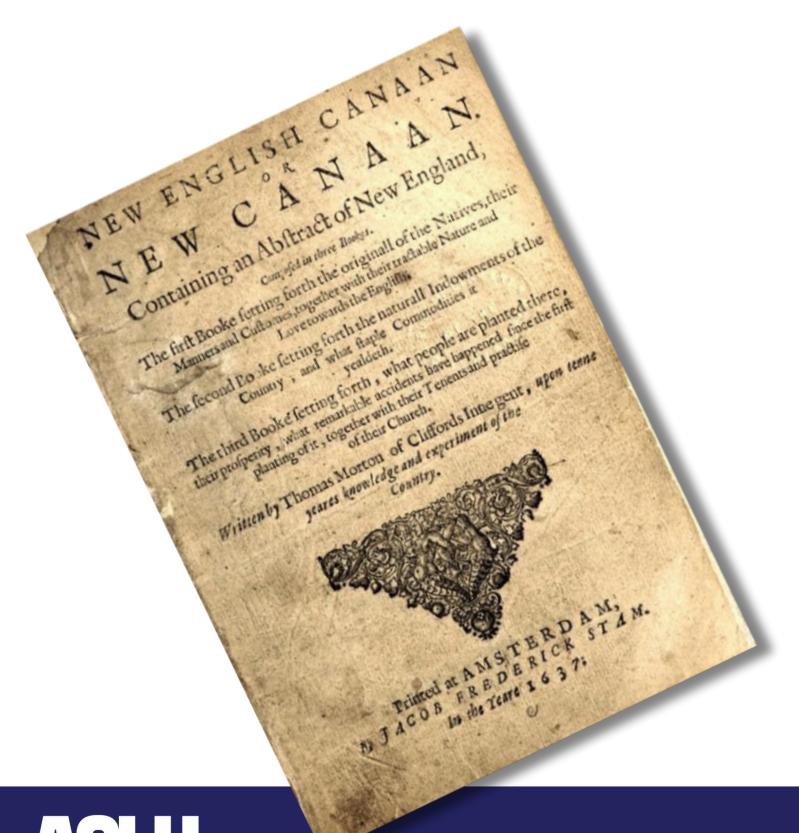


# The Right to Learn

**Combatting Classroom Censorship** 



### First book banned in the United States:



- Quincy, Massachusetts!
- The New Canaan by Thomas Morton
- Banned in 1637
- Contained harsh critique of Puritan customs and power structures



## 2022: Unprecedented censorship attempts



demands to censor library books and resources, according the ALA

**Almost twice 2021** 

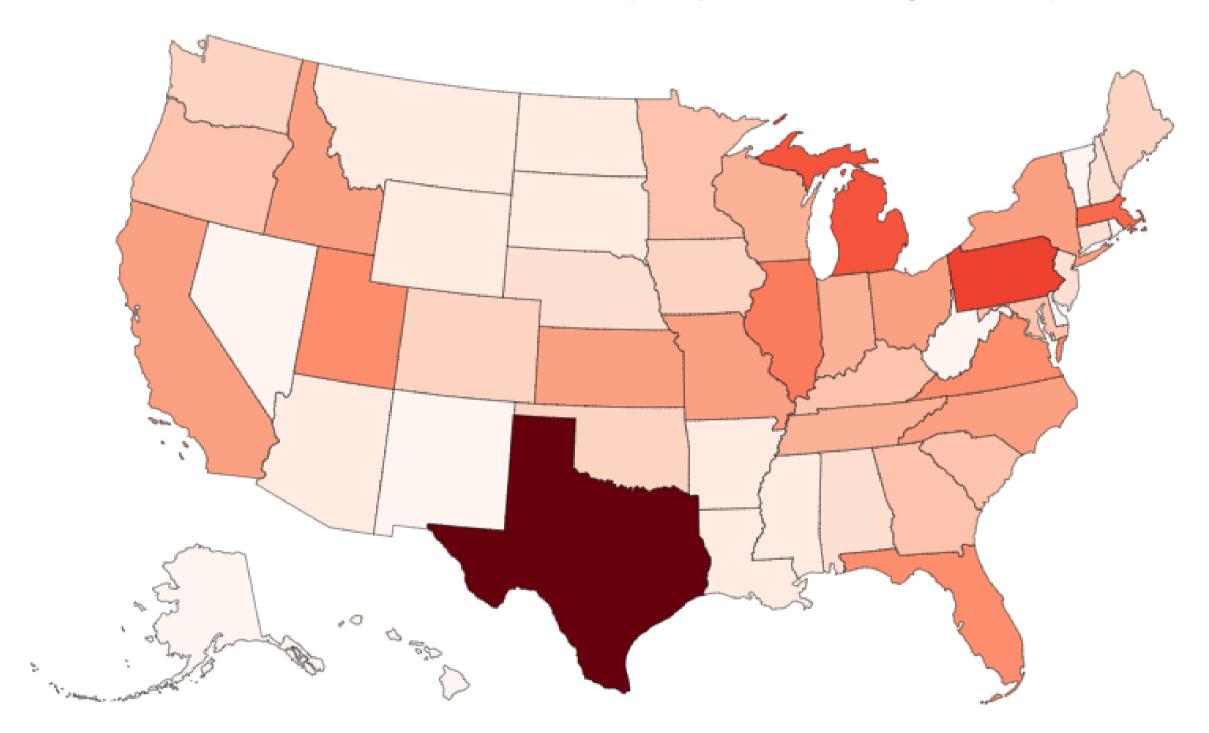




## Attempts to Restrict Access to Books in 2022

An attempt may include challenges to multiple titles





**Source: American Library Association -- Office for Intellectual Freedom** 







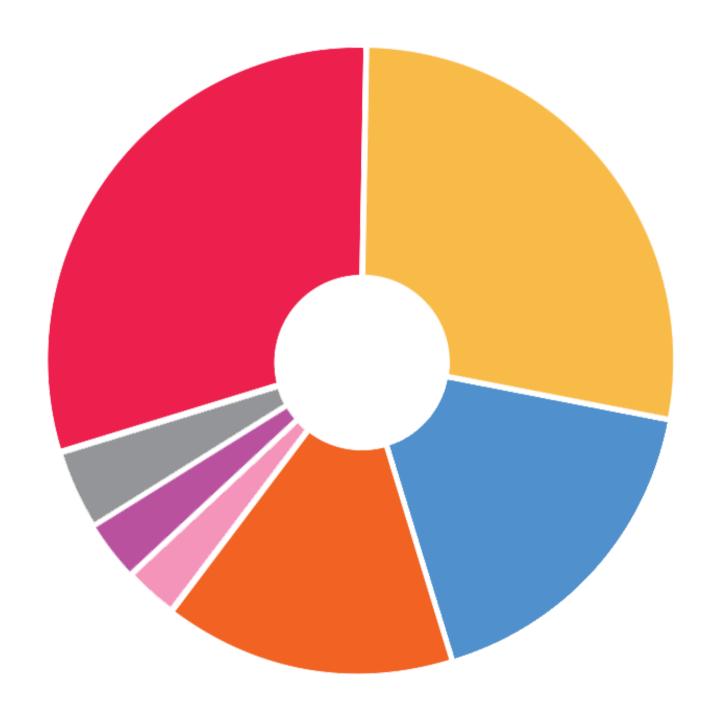
states introduced book-banning bills

bills introduced nationwide





## Who initiates book challenges?



**Source: American Library Association -- www.ala.org** 

**30% Parents** 

**28% Patrons** 

17% Political/Religious Groups

**15% Board/Administration** 

**3% Librarians/Teachers** 

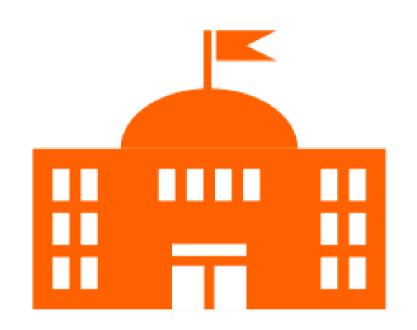
**3% Elected Officials** 

4% Other (includes non-custodial relatives, nonresidents, community members without library cards, etc.)





## Where do challenges take place?









48%
Public Libraries

41%
School Libraries

10% Schools

1%
College Libraries /
Other Public
Institutions

**Source: American Library Association -- www.ala.org** 





### Massachusetts 2022

- 45 attempts to restrict access to books in MA
- 57 book titles challenged in MA





## Top 13 Most Banned Books 2022













### January 23, 2023

Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents

Rurlington Road Suite 113 209 Burlington Road, Suite 113

Massachusetts Association of School CommitteesBoston, MA 02109

Dear Superintendents, School Committees, and Community Members:

Re: Equality, Free Speech, and Democracy related Implications of Calls to

The American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts (ACLUM) and GLBTQ The American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts (ACLUM) and GLBT demands by a vocal minority of parents and other interested parties that schools Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) write in response to the recent uptick in remove certain books from school libraries. These demands fray the bonds of trust demands by a vocal minority of parents and other interested parties that schools and cooperation among parents, schools, and students. They track politicized and remove certain books from school libraries. These demands fray the bonds of trust partisan narratives in the larger culture, and regularly focus on books that discuss and cooperation among parents, schools, and students. They track politicized and or depict the experiences and history of members of LGBTQ+ communities and/or partisan narratives in the larger culture, and regularly focus on books that discuss of color. Concessions to these demands undermine diversity and

or depict the experiences and history of members of LGBTQ+ communities of color. Concessions to these demands undermine diversity and communities of color. Concessions to these demands under inclusion in our schools and raise serious legal questions. We applaud the schools and communities that have resisted these demands, who deserve to have their experiences represented and We applaud the schools and communities that have resisted these demands, have preserved our National tradition of libraries as places for young people to have stood with students who deserve to have their experiences represented, and learn, imagine, grow and explore. For those who have removed or limited access have preserved our National tradition of libraries as places for young people to books, in light of the issues detailed below, we urge you to reconsider and promptly

Legal Issues

learn, imagine, grow and explore. For those who have removed or limited access to restore books to library shelves. Library book removals are often not only contrary to an appropriate discrimination in educ Library book removals are often not only contrary to an appropriate education in education

ACLU of MA • One Center Plaza Suite 850, Boston, MA 02108 • 617.482.3170 • www.achm.org





## Rights and Legal Issues

• Equality based on race, national origin, sex, gender identity and sexual orientation

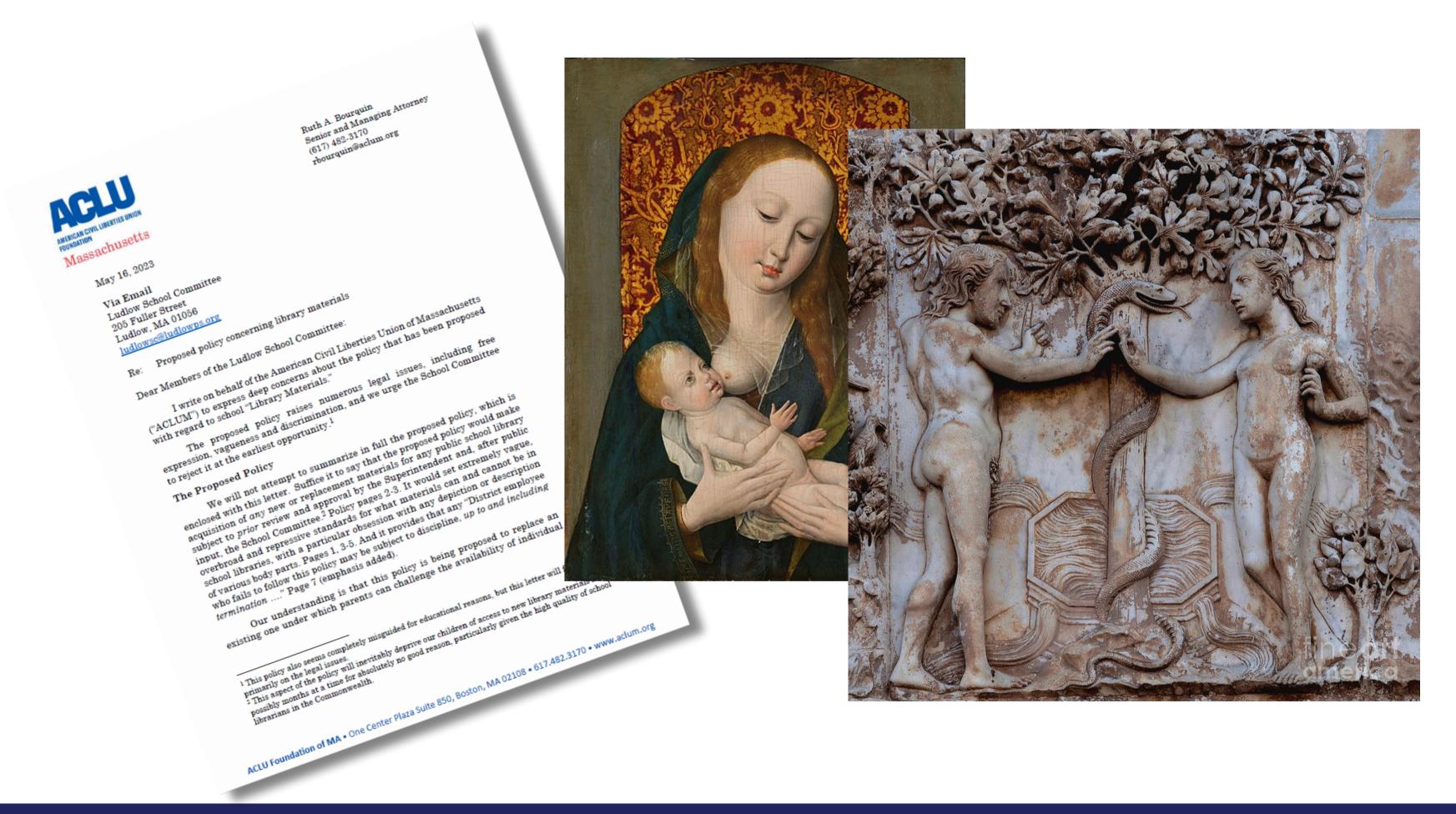


• Free speech rights, including the right to receive information

• Diversity in Education as a Bedrock of Democracy

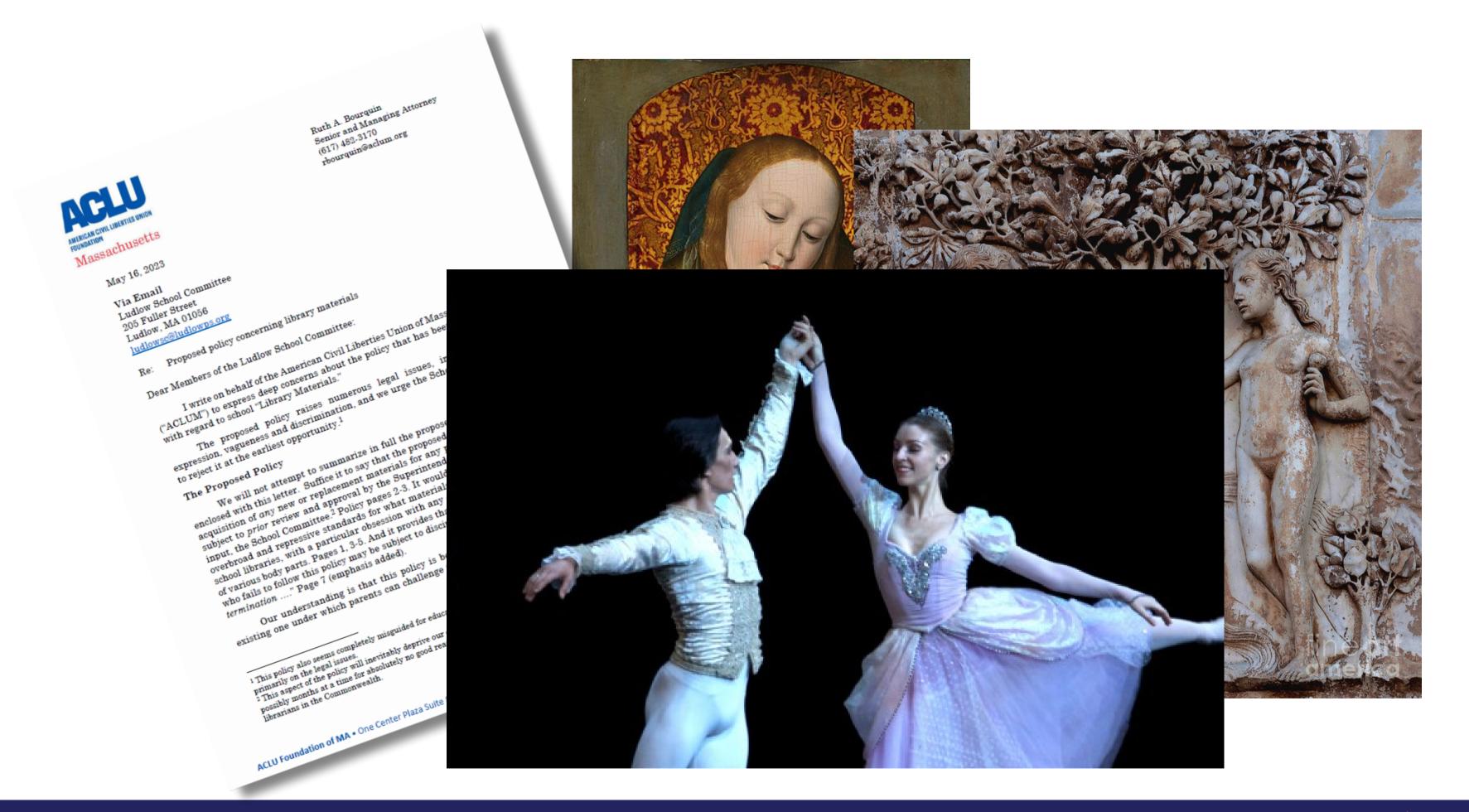


















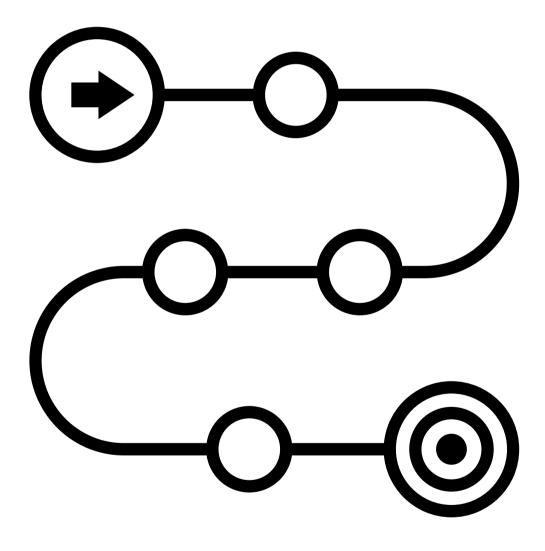
"We urge the Ludlow School Committee to reject this proposed policy, and hope other local officials take note. Such policies undermine students' right to receive an accurate, inclusive education and pave the way for unlawful discrimination."



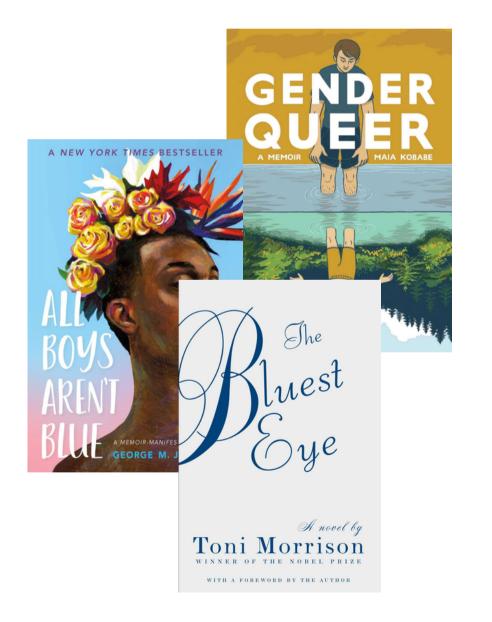


## Get organized

Learn about and engage with the process



### **Engage directly with the material**







## Get organized

- Know who your decision makers are
- Organize different stakeholders
- Turn people out to the hearing/meeting
- Relational organizing







## **Get Organized**

- Collect and share personal stories
- Create a petition/sign-on letter
- Write letters to the editor











### **Online Toolkit**

aclum.org/en/exercise-your-right-learn

- Right to Learn Toolkit
- Resist Book Bans
- Resist Other Restrictive Policies
- Know Your Rights: Back to School
- Advocates Academy







### **Take Action!**

SD. 2673 An Act regarding free expression

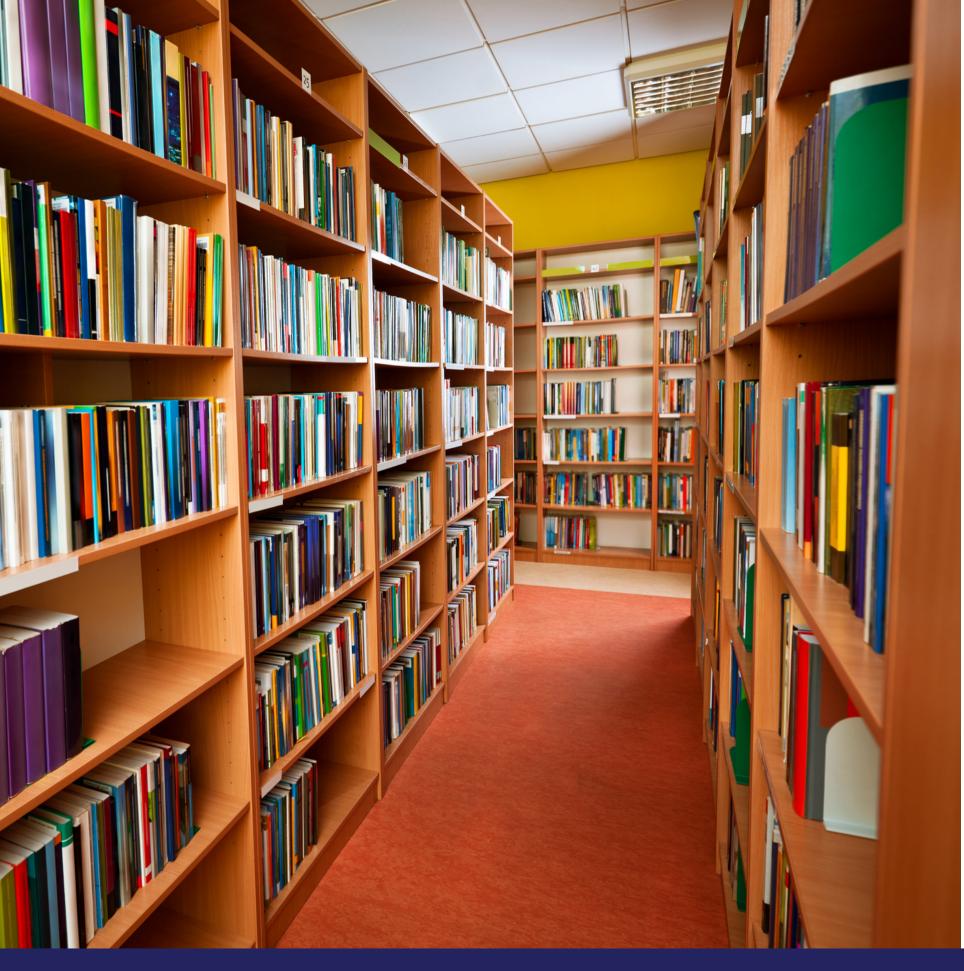
The bill ensures that public and school libraries can offer diverse and inclusive books, media, and materials without political interference.



https://mobilize.aclum.org/a/tell-state-lawmakers-protect-students-right-learn







## Thank you!





