

WAYS TO TAKE ACTION

Stay engaged!

- Choose 1-2 topics that you care the most about, and stay informed about those topics.
- Support reputable news outlets and reporters to follow.
- Find a sustainable way to stay up-to-date without getting burnt out by intentionally deciding how and when you'll consume news.
- Find community in people passionate about the same topics as you.
- Sign up for our emails, or follow us on social media to stay up to date with civil liberties in Rhode Island.

Monitor legislation!

- Hundreds of bills are introduced every legislative session, which begins in January. Pick an interest area or two and contact your state legislators — *check out the “What I You Can Do and When” page in your packet!*
- Check the legislative dashboard on the ACLU of RI website (www.riaclu.org/legdashboard) during the session to stay up to date on bills and when you can take action.

Contact your elected officials and attend meetings and hearings!

- Call or email your elected officials at all levels — U.S. Rep. and Senator, state legislators, members of your municipal councils, your local library board — to advocate for the issues that matter to you.
- Attend local government hearings and make your voice heard about the impact of their proposals.
- *See the “How to Talk so Your Legislators Will Hear You” page, and apply the same skills to every level of government!*

Share your personal stories and educate others!

- Read banned books, and talk about them with friends and family.
- Tell your friends and peers about your experiences.
- Write a letter to the editor or an opinion piece on your 1-2 issue areas.
- Encourage others to tell their stories too.

Donate to or volunteer for local organizations!

- Join or donate to organizations doing legal or legislative work, like the ACLU of RI, that are working to protect our civil liberties.
- Join mutual aid groups or local community organizations helping those most directly impacted
- Go to your local library!

Website for more information and to explore our work: www.riaclu.org

Contact us via email or phone if you have questions: info@riaclu.org or 401-831-7171

ISSUES IN RHODE ISLAND

We covered a range of issues in our presentation, here's a summary of some of the things that you can take action on:

Advocating for Privacy Protections

- Providence's "Real Time Crime Center" is a new way the police have of integrating real-time feeds from various surveillance devices across the city — including drones, automated license plate readers, and even privately-owned camera systems if the owners opt in to the program. This has the potential to undermine the privacy rights of everyone who lives in or visits Providence, as we don't currently have laws that provide guardrails to the Crime Center's use. If you're a Providence resident, contact your City Council member to advocate for an ordinance to protect our privacy.
- Flock cameras are increasingly being used across Rhode Island. These cameras can not only be used as automated license plate reader systems, but can identify details as revealing as bumper stickers on cars, and have the capability to be extremely invasive to privacy. Data from Flock systems can, and are, shared between police departments across the country and federal agencies (including immigration agencies) unless there are specific ordinances or laws preventing sharing of data. Contact your local City or Town Council and your Rhode Island legislator to advocate against the use of Flock cameras, and to pass legislation and ordinances to limit how long data is kept and to prevent the sharing of Flock data with any other police departments or federal agencies.

Immigrants' Rights & Ordinances

- Immigration ordinances at the local level can protect immigrants' rights and prevent police from assisting in immigration enforcement unless required by a court order. Contact your local City or Town Council to advocate for the implementation of a pro-immigration ordinance, if there isn't already one in place.

Transgender Rights

- We're working on Data Privacy legislation that would prevent third-parties from collecting our digital data and using it to infer if someone accesses reproductive or transgender health care. This legislation will be introduced during the 2026 Legislative Session, which begins in January, but you can contact your state legislators before then to share your support for these protections.



ADVOCACY 101: WHAT YOU CAN DO AND WHEN

1) Before a bill is introduced:

- Research the issues involved.
- Research your legislators and their positions.
- Connect with local special interest groups that analyze policy to learn about the bills they are supporting or opposing.
- Encourage your legislators to introduce bills on issues that you care about.
- Tell others why legislators need to act by sharing information in person, via social media and on the Internet.

2) When a bill is in committee:

- Contact committee members to ask them to support, reject, or amend the bill. Recruit your friends to contact them as well.
- Attend public hearings.
- Testify at the public hearing for or against the bill, particularly if you have a personal story related to the issue.

3) When a bill is on the floor:

- Contact your legislator to support, reject, or amend the bill.
- Ask your friends to do the same.
- Tell people why you think the bill should or should not pass by posting on social media or writing a letter to the editor in your local newspaper.

4) When a bill is on the governor's desk:

- Contact the Governor's office to encourage signing or vetoing.
- Identify other people who may have special influence with the Governor, and contact them.



ADVOCACY 101:

HOW TO TALK SO YOUR LEGISLATOR WILL HEAR YOU

As constituents, you can and should talk with your legislator any time of year; you don't need to wait until they're at the State House to get their attention. Get to know your legislators and let them get to know you; the best way is to interact with them often. In the meantime, here are some tips to help you maximize your impact.

1) Be prepared, be brief, be courteous.

- Keep in mind that most of your legislators do not have staff. This can mean that it's hard to reach them, especially if there is an issue of great controversy, but it also means that you have a chance to persuade them directly.
- A little background research can go a long way - you never know when you can give your legislator new information on an issue that interests you. Prepare to emphasize one or two points you really want your legislator to understand.
- Legislators are most interested in how the issue affects their constituents. Whenever possible, link your arguments back to yourself, your neighbors, or your community.
- Keep letters to 1-2 paragraphs and phone messages to a few sentences.
- If possible, include praise for a position the legislator has taken in the past. Let your legislator know if you disagree with them, but explain why rather than just criticize their position.

2) Call them.

- Talk to your legislators. (You can find how to reach them below.) When you reach someone, state the issue, what you want them to do, and why it matters to you.
- If you get their voicemail, ask them to give you a call back. Then follow up later with another form of communication.

3) Write them a letter.

- Personal letters can be very effective. A handwritten letter will especially stand out. If you're part of a letter-writing campaign, consider using your own words rather than copying a script verbatim.
- Legislators receive a lot of e-mail, so if you send an e-mail you should follow up later with a phone call or other form of communication. Some legislators ask that you put your address or zip code in the body of your e-mail so they know you're a constituent and they can pay special attention.

4) Meet them face-to-face.

- Go to events like town halls, forums, and other meetings where they are speaking. Come prepared with a question. Be sure to introduce yourself after.
- Go to the State House. If your legislator is hard to pin down, you know they'll be in attendance for State House business. Contact them in advance to let them know you are coming. Testify before legislative committees on bills that interest you.
- Invite them to your home. Your legislators are your neighbors. Call and invite them to meet with you and other like-minded members of your community.

5) Thank them.

- If your legislator has done something you agree with, let them know – especially if they were in the minority. This helps them to know their constituents are behind them the next time they have to make a similar vote.

6) Contact info and more information:

- All legislators can be reached by mail at the State House: 82 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02903.
- Home contact information for most legislators is available on the General Assembly's website: www.rilegislature.gov.
- Find your legislator under the House or Senate tab, and then click on the "Biography" tab to find their address and/or phone number.
- If you're not sure who your legislator is, visit vote.sos.ri.gov.

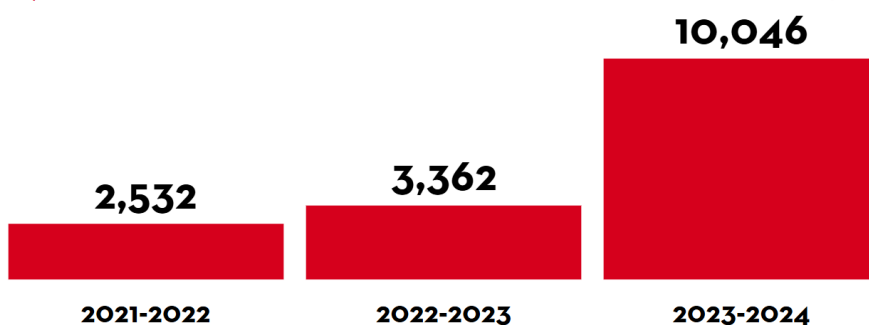
Books Censored or Challenged in Rhode Island 2020 – 2024

Information collected by RI Authors Against Book Bans (RI AABB)

This list contains the 33 books that have had challenges brought against them in the state of Rhode Island from 2020-2024. The chart to the

right is the number of book bans throughout the country, recorded by PEN America.

Instances of book bans have increased over the past three years
July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2024



Data from PEN America Index of School Book Bans.

To the best of RI AABB's knowledge, the only challenge on this list that ended with a book being removed from a school or library was the 2021 challenge of Alson Bechdel's *Fun Home* in the Pawtucket School Committee.

1. *My Body is Growing*, Dagner Geisler
2. *Identity & Gender*, Charlies Ogden
3. *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*, Alison Bechdel
4. *Gender Queer: A Memoir*, Maia Kobabe
5. *This Book is Gay*, Juno Daeson
6. *Two Grooms on a Cake*, Rob Sanders
7. *A Place Inside of Me: A Poem to Heal the Heart*, Zetta Elliot
8. *Beloved*, Toni Morrison
9. *Drama*, Raina Telgemeier
10. *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, Jonathan Safran Foer
11. *Feed Your Mind: A Story of August Wilson*; Jen Bryant, Cannaday Chapman
12. *Fly on the Wall*, Remy Lai
13. *More Happy Than Not*, Adam Silvera
14. *Were I Not a Girl: The Inspiring and True Story of Dr. James Barry*, Lisa Robinson
15. *By the Time You Read This, I'll Be Dead*, Julie Anne Peters
16. *Nineteen Minutes*, Jodi Picoult

Continued on reverse

17. *Sloppy Firsts* (Jessica Darling Series), Megan McCafferty
18. *The Absolute True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, Sherman Alexie
19. *The Truth About Alice*, Jennifer Mathieu
20. *Thirteen Reasons Why*, Jay Asher
21. *This One Summer*, Mariko Asher
22. *Tricks*, Ellen Hopkins
23. *Two Boys Kissing*, David Levithan
24. *A Costume for Charly*, C.K. Malone
25. *Bloody Mary: Ghost of a Queen?*, Andrus Aubre
26. *Blankets*, Craig Thompson
27. *All-American Boys*, Jason Reynolds
28. *Bob*; Wendy Mass; Rebecca Stead
29. *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice*, Phillip Hoose
30. *Stamped*, Jason Reynolds
31. *The Hate You Give*, Angie Thomas
32. *History of Nursery Rhymes*, Percy B. Green
33. *Rebound*, Kwame Alexander