

**You might need to sign up ahead of time to speak at a board meeting.** If you haven't done it before, you can always call your library and ask whether you need to sign up and how. It's their job to find information for you!

## 1. Say "ban"

The current censors love to say they aren't banning books; they think "book banning" sounds bad even to their allies. **If you're talking about banning books, call it banning books.** If you want to explain why taking books out of just one library is a ban, you can point out:

- **Kids don't have money or cars.** Many kids can only get books at their school library. Many kids can only get books at their public library.
  - Why public? Some schools don't have libraries, and some school libraries don't allow kids with lost items to borrow more books.
- Kids, especially younger kids, find books by browsing and won't know about a book if it's not on the shelf.

## 2. Value skilled labor

Book banning may not seem like a labor issue, but replacing library workers' training with the whims of white supremacists is an intentional step in **dismantling libraries as a public good** by making them less usable, appealing, and effective. Depending on circumstances in your library, you can say something like:

- I'm glad our library continues to leave book selection in the hands of trained staff and prioritize diversity in the collection for all ages.
- **Library workers are trained to select quality, age-appropriate books,** and I trust their expertise.
- The handful of people who want to ban books shouldn't get to override the experience and training of library staff.

## 3. Speak as a parent, if you are one

Moms for Liberty wants boards to think they speak for parents. You can prove them wrong. You could say:

- I want my kid to read about all kinds of people and experiences so that whoever they meet, **they're ready to be a good friend.**
- I want my kid to be able to read about families like ours and families that are different from ours.

- If you cave to a few loud parents who want to ban books, you're taking choices away from families like mine that want these books on the shelf. **They shouldn't get to decide what's right for my kids.**

If your library is facing challenges to specific books, you can read them and say what you and your kids liked.

**Non-parents:** you're still a library patron. You could say:

- It's important to me that all the children and adults in my community have library books that reflect us.
- I'm ashamed that my community is considering banning books.
- I want my taxes to go to a collection that tells the truth about our history, even the ugly parts.

#### **4. If kids have come to defend their access to books, lift up their presence and arguments**

Kids are most affected by the current wave of bans.

#### **5. Say what you came to say**

You don't have to use these points if you have something else to share. **Your own experiences are important.**

**Plus:**

#### **Invite your friends to speak too**

Once you know how to speak at a library board meeting, you have information other people could use! Offer to sign like-minded people up to speak, if signing up is necessary, and help them figure out what to say. The censors are packing meetings; we should too.

#### **Note on censorship**

No library has space for all books, and collections change as new books and information replace what's dated and unused. But the new books should be full of Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, queer and trans people, immigrants, and accurate history. When removing books isn't about quality but about **keeping ideas—or people—out of the collection**, that's censorship. Censors go after books people *want* to read.

**Read more:**

Bookriot's censorship materials, written by current and former librarians:

[bookriot.com/category/censorship](http://bookriot.com/category/censorship)

They have articles on **how to speak at board meetings** and another on **how to talk about book bans**, among other topics.

**Further action:**

- Find out how people get on your library board and volunteer or run to join it
- Ten ways you can support your public library: [bit.ly/10WaysLibrary](http://bit.ly/10WaysLibrary)

For the People - [librariesforthepeople.org](http://librariesforthepeople.org)