



Below are Additional Quotes from Authors on the PEN America Florida Project

Laurie Halse Anderson

"Public libraries and schools have a duty to offer a broad range of books to the communities that they serve. People who find a book that they don't like don't have to read it. They do *not* have the right to dictate what books other people, or other people's children, can read. I am proud to support PEN America as it defends our Constitution by fighting back against book banners and others bent on destroying our freedom to read. Remember: censorship is the child of fear and the father of ignorance."

David Baldacci:

"Book banning is antithetical to all that America represents, and I proudly stand with PEN America and my fellow authors in working to ensure that individuals remain free to choose the books that they wish to read and explore."

Brit Bennett

"It's appalling that a small movement is ripping books off shelves, denying young people the ability to learn and grow intellectually, and frightening their neighbors about what lives on the shelves of their public school. I stand with my fellow authors. I stand with PEN America"

Lee Child:

"I had parents and I was a parent and I know how tough that job is. But this is a complicated world with a complicated future. Pulling books off shelves is a dumb response. The very bravest thing parents can do is to encourage their kids to read anything and everything, to learn, feel, experience, and figure it all out for themselves. Help them, don't handicap them. And never forget: if their reading includes history, they'll see that book bans never end well."

Daniel Handler

All books are problematic.

Every single piece of writing is upsetting to someone. We cannot spend our time removing books which offend us personally, or all the shelves in the world will be bare, and then the entire world will be very upset indeed.

Khaled Hosseini

"Book bans are harmful and undemocratic. We have to reclaim the sacred spaces in our schools where students can explore books and expand their sense of community without the looming shadow of a politician peeking over their shoulder."



David Levithan

"For over twenty years, I've heard from students who've told me that my books or other YA books have helped them, brought them joy, and, in some cases, saved their lives. I don't only know the books that censors are trying to erase; I know the students whose identities and experiences they are also trying to erase in their exclusion of our work from libraries. It is imperative to me to make sure the life-saving, life-enriching tie that exists between stories and readers isn't recklessly broken for unconstitutionally political reasons."

Casey McQuiston

"Book bans are about so much more than books—they aim to push marginalized voices further into the margins, to determine with prejudice who is fit to exist in public. Young readers are sharp, and they know this as well as we do. When we fight for their freedom to be curious, discover their world, and see their reflection in books, we fight for their right to simply *be*."

Brad Meltzer

"Florida is my home state. Our books have been challenged, local educators are under attack, and friends who are teachers here tell me they're terrified they'll be arrested for reading a book. I don't like bullies. So how do we respond to the current wave of censorship? We follow the lessons of Dr. King and Rosa Parks: We fight back. That's why we're opening a PEN America office here in Florida to push back against attempts to strip books off the shelves."

Todd Parr

"My picture books were banned in four school districts last year. My books illustrate many different types of families – big, small, near, far, one parent or two, quiet, or noisy. Children and families in Florida need to see themselves reflected in books in fun, silly, and reassuring ways. Books are for everyone!"

Jodi Picoult

"Twenty of my books have been banned by two different Florida school districts, and individual titles of mine have been banned in a dozen more Florida school districts — often by parents who admit they have not read the novels. They've been targeted as 'adult romances' when half the books do not contain a single kiss. However, they do address gun violence, reproductive health, gay rights, and the rise of fascism — and challenge kids to think for themselves. To the groups that are spearheading this rise in book banning, there is nothing more terrifying than individual critical thought. I am proud to stand with my fellow authors — those whose books have been banned and



those who haven't — and with PEN America to address this wave of book banning by starting in its epicenter, Florida. Together, we will fight with Floridians for the very core of intellectual freedom: the freedom to read and to think for oneself."

Kathy Reichs

"I believe young people should have the freedom to read across a wide range of topics and genres, including materials that may be challenging or controversial. I stand with my fellow authors in opposing the banning of books deemed objectionable by a few. I stand with PEN America."

Nora Roberts

Growing up, everyone in my house read. You could find a book anywhere -- from the living room to the attic. To me that was normal. It was ordinary. And I had free rein to learn books were treasures to be enjoyed, doors opening to worlds to be explored. Experiences and points of view beyond my own to be discussed.

I raised my kids exactly the same way: with books all over the house, with the freedom to choose and explore and talk.

Every book read for pleasure, for exploration, for learning, is a victory. And victories should be celebrated and embraced.

I'm appalled that a few have somehow amassed the power to say no to ALL children, all teenagers when it comes to reading certain books. I stand with PEN America in the battle to keep books on shelves in order to give everyone the chance to learn what treasures, what knowledge, what experiences await within the cover of a book."

Every book ban is motivated by fear and a need for power and control. It's no different here. The good news is, throughout history, if you're on the side of banning ideas, you eventually will lose.

Reshma Saujani

"Through my own experience as a banned author, I've learned that book bans aren't really about books. Under the guise of "parental rights," everyday citizens are using our schools to drive an egregious and un-American agenda that aims, among other things, to oppress women and other marginalized groups in our society, and send our country backwards. But, I've also learned there are more of us than there are of them. Let's harness our collective power, and get to work. Our children's future—our country's future—depends on it."

Mo Willems

"Trying to navigate life's on-ramps, potholes, detours, closures, and occasional magnificent vistas without ample books to help you navigate is like trying to drive a bus without a steering wheel."