Know Your Rights: Your Guide to Understanding the 2024 Education Censorship Bills in Tennessee

Webinar Resource Links

Event Resources:
- Recording
- PowerPoint
- Q&A Summary
- Survey

Who Are We?
- The Education Trust - Tennessee
- TN Alliance for Equity in Education
- TN Coalition for Truth in Our Classrooms

How Did We Get Here?
- Education Week: Background of the Censorship Movement
- Chalkbeat TN (2021): Tennessee governor signs bill restricting how race and bias can be taught in schools
- Testimony: TN Youth Coalition students testify before TN Senate Judiciary Committee regarding School Library Censorship bill (wistia.com)

Where Are We Today?
- The Washington Post (2022) An Explosion of Culture-War Laws is Changing Schools
- United Against Book Bans (2024): American Library Association - 2023 Book Bans
- The 74 (2024) New Study: Two Thirds of Teachers Censor Themselves Even When They Don’t Have To

Past Coalition Know Your Rights Events
- May 2022:
  - Recording & PowerPoint
- November 2022:
  - Recording & PowerPoint
- June 2023
  - Recording & PowerPoint
2021, 2022, & 2023 Tennessee Censorship Legislation

- 2021:
  - Public Chapter 493: first censorship law in TN impacting “prohibited/divisive concepts” in K-12 curriculum and teaching

- 2022:
  - Public Chapter 744: Age Appropriate Materials Act
  - Public Chapter 1137: Textbook Commission; Statewide Book Bans
    - Textbook Commission’s Library Guidance
  - Public Chapter 818: Higher Education “Divisive Concepts” Restrictions

- 2023:
  - Public Chapter 438: Restrictions on Implicit Bias Training
  - Public Chapter 268: The Higher Education Freedom & Transparency Act
  - Public Chapter 448: Student Pronouns Restrictions
  - Public Chapter 285: Private School Regulations on Sports Participation
    - Related bills: Public Chapter 40 & Public Chapter 909
  - Public Chapter 353: Expanding Parent Consent in LEA Activities
  - Public Chapter 278: Textbook Seller Criminalization
  - Public Chapter 472: Library Complaints Process; Amendment to Age Appropriate Materials Act

- Wins:
  - Public Chapter 1063 & Public Chapter 127 Requiring the teaching of the Civil Rights Movement
  - Public Chapter 938: Requiring the Teaching of Black History & Culture in Grades 5-8

Promising Momentum

- Chalkbeat TN (2023): Teachers sue over Tennessee law restricting what they can teach about race, gender, and bias
- Chalkbeat TN (2024): Teachers can challenge Tennessee law restricting instruction on race, gender, bias, judge rules

2024 Censorship Legislation

- Public Chapter 782: Age Appropriate Materials Amendment
- Public Chapter 780: Anti-Discrimination & Protected Classes (K-12)
- Public Chapter 815: Penalties for Violations of Divisive Concepts
- Public Chapter 832: Student Gender Identity Parental Reporting
- Public Chapter 795: Baby Olivia Act
2024 Legislative Wins

Bills that did NOT pass

- HB1605 / SB1722: Prohibition of Pride Flags
- HB1632 / SB1858: Parents' Right to Sue, Age-Appropriate Materials
- HB1913 / SB1873: Parents Bill of Rights
- HB1414 / SB0620: Families' Rights & Responsibilities Act
- HB1661 / SB2173: Restricted Access by Minors to Obscene Library Materials Act
- SB2107 / HB2457: Sexually Explicit Materials Restrictions
- HB1660 / SB2351: Anti-Discrimination and Protected Classes (Higher Ed)
- HB1948 / SB2350: Dismantling Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) in Higher Ed

Learn more: 2024 Coalition for Truth in Our Classrooms Advocacy Toolkit

ACLU-TN Resources

- ACLU-TN
- Censorship in TN Schools: Age Appropriate Materials Act (2024)
- Censorship in Tennessee's Higher Education (2023)
- Censorship in K-12 Tennessee Schools (2022)
- FAQ: Critical Race Theory
- TN Student Rights & Youth Activism
- If you are aware of a school using new laws to stop student speech, association, or other activity, contact ACLU-TN using this legal intake form
- Volunteer with the ACLU-TN

RALLY Resources

- RALLY
- We Believe Campaign & We Believe partner toolkit
- Strategic messaging guidance
- Latest message testing insights

Next Actions

- Sign up for weekly legislative updates, including our bill tracker
- Learn more at TN Education Advocacy Hub
- If you are aware of a school using new laws to stop student speech, association, or other activity, contact ACLU-TN: https://action.aclu.org/legal-intake/aclu-tn-legal-intake-form
- Review Coalition webpage of resources [continually updated]:
- Is your organization, or do you know an organization, interested in getting involved with our Coalition? Contact Meili Powell, mpowell@edtrust.org
- Reflect on the 2024 legislative session
Coalition Partner Advocacy Actions & Resources

Action & Advocacy Opportunities:

- **Volunteer with the ACLU-TN** - Sign Up Now
- **TEA** early enrollment is happening now - join today
  - An educator can join now (summer) and not pay dues till September
- **TEA** launched educator survey - take the survey now
  - Input from educators helps drive TEA focus on growing impact of public education
- **TN Educator of Color Alliance** Membership Network - free to join! Join Here
- **TN Association of School Librarians** - Reach out to TASL if you or you know a librarian who faces censorship in their districts.
- **EmpowerED Student Network**: Register Now
- **YWCA Nashville & Middle TN**: Learn more about YWCA’s social justice & advocacy programming here.

Follow our Coalition partner event co-hosts & sign up for their newsletters:

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