



The News That Didn't Make The News

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Project Censored on Banned Books Week

September 18-24 is the 40th annual Banned Books Week. Project Censored says we should commemorate it by redoubling our efforts to fight censorship.

Fair Oaks, CA—As the 40th annual [Banned Books Week](#) approaches it's time to unequivocally condemn censorship in its many guises. Project Censored has been at the forefront of fighting censorship for close to 50 years, and says that we should be as worried as ever about the increased attempts to ban books and attack academic freedom. "Across the United States, this past year has brought a staggering increase in book challenges, bans, and other attacks on the right to read and academic freedom," says Project Censored Director, Mickey Huff. To commemorate Banned Books Week, [Project Censored Radio](#) hosted a panel discussion with some of the most outspoken and fierce anti-censorship voices, including student activists on the front lines in the classroom.

Project Censored Director, Mickey Huff and Project Censored Associate Director, Andy Lee Roth are available for interview. Here is just some of what they can discuss.

- The most common targets of book bans deal with complex issues related to American history and sensitive areas such as sexuality, abuse, and violence. The attempt to shut down speech on these issues deprives us of our right to grapple with some of the most important questions confronting us today.
- Efforts to ban books often focus on Young Adult content and school libraries and curricula. This deprives students of exposure to the many wonderful and diverse voices that comprise our society. Children should not be taught to fear ideas different than their own, and adults should not let ignorance guide their civic engagement.
- Both left and right have attempted to censor books or attack academic freedom, often claiming that the ideas expressed or being taught may cause harm or are the

equivalent of violence. No matter where our political sensibilities lie, we must reject efforts to equate speech with violence and threats to safety unless there are actual calls for harm, which are already unlawful.

- Book bans should be seen as attacks on democracy. Democracy cannot flourish when ideas and information are censored by the powerful and when we are prohibited from discussing the complex issues that matter to all of us.
- We must mount a bipartisan resistance to book bans and other forms of censorship and recognize that their sharp increase is cause for alarm and action. Banned Books Week is the perfect time to shed light on this urgent issue.
- Project Censored is a member of the Banned Books Week Coalition and believes strongly that students should have the right to read, be intellectually curious, and access diverse sources information without fear of retaliation or stigmatization.

ABOUT MICKEY HUFF

Mickey Huff is the director of Project Censored and the president of the nonprofit Media Freedom Foundation. He has coedited 14 annual editions of the *Censored* book series for Seven Stories Press in New York, now in partnership with [The Censored Press](#), the Project's new publishing imprint. His most recent books include [Let's Agree to Disagree: A Critical Thinking Guide to Communication, Conflict Management, and Critical Media Literacy](#) (Routledge, 2022), co-authored with Nolan Higdon; and [Project Censored's State of the Free Press 2022](#), co-edited with Andy Lee Roth (2022). In 2019, he was recognized by the Society of Professional Journalists, Northern California Chapter, for their annual James Madison Freedom of Information, Beverly Kees Educator Award. Huff is host of the syndicated public affairs program, [The Project Censored Show](#), on Pacifica Radio which airs on 50 stations around the US. He is also professor of social science, history, and journalism at Diablo Valley College where he is chair of the journalism department. [More](#)

ABOUT ANDY LEE ROTH

Andy Lee Roth is the associate director of Project Censored. He coordinates the Project's Campus Affiliates Program, a news media research network of several hundred students and faculty at two dozen colleges and universities across North America. He has coedited 13 annual editions of the *Censored* book series. His latest book is [Project Censored's State of the Free Press 2022](#), co-edited with Mickey Huff (2022). His research and writing have been published in a variety of outlets, including Index on Censorship, In These Times, YES! Magazine, Media, Culture & Society, and the International Journal of Press/Politics. He earned a PhD in sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles, and a BA in sociology and anthropology at Haverford College.

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