

# Identifying and Understanding the Groups Working to Undermine Public Education

**Presenters: Carol Schnaiter  
and Diane Chapman**

**Illinois Education  
Association-Retired**



# Competency Theme: Advocacy

Theme(s) and Progression Level(s): Competency Theme: Advocacy

- Utilizes best practices in advocacy and political efforts
- Engages and builds mutually beneficial relationships to advance advocacy and political goal
- Acts as a political advocate
- Foundational Level 1: Learns issues to better understand content; shares key messages with members, the community and partners

Skills: strategies for advocacy, how to be an advocate

Meets the needs of all constituency groups

# Session Goal(s) and Objectives

By the end of this session participants will:

- Recognize and understand the well-coordinated nation-wide effort by groups who threaten public education and the reasons for their determination to seek privatization
- Use advocacy strategies to effectively share information about the groups who threaten public education and our retirement benefits and about the pro-public education groups that promote public education and how we can advocate for public education-friendly candidates and issues
- Share the knowledge acquired through their discussions during the presentation with their state and local affiliate members, family/friends, and their community



5 Minutes  
in your groups

Why Do We Need to  
Identify Our Adversaries

# WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF OUR ADVERSARIES?

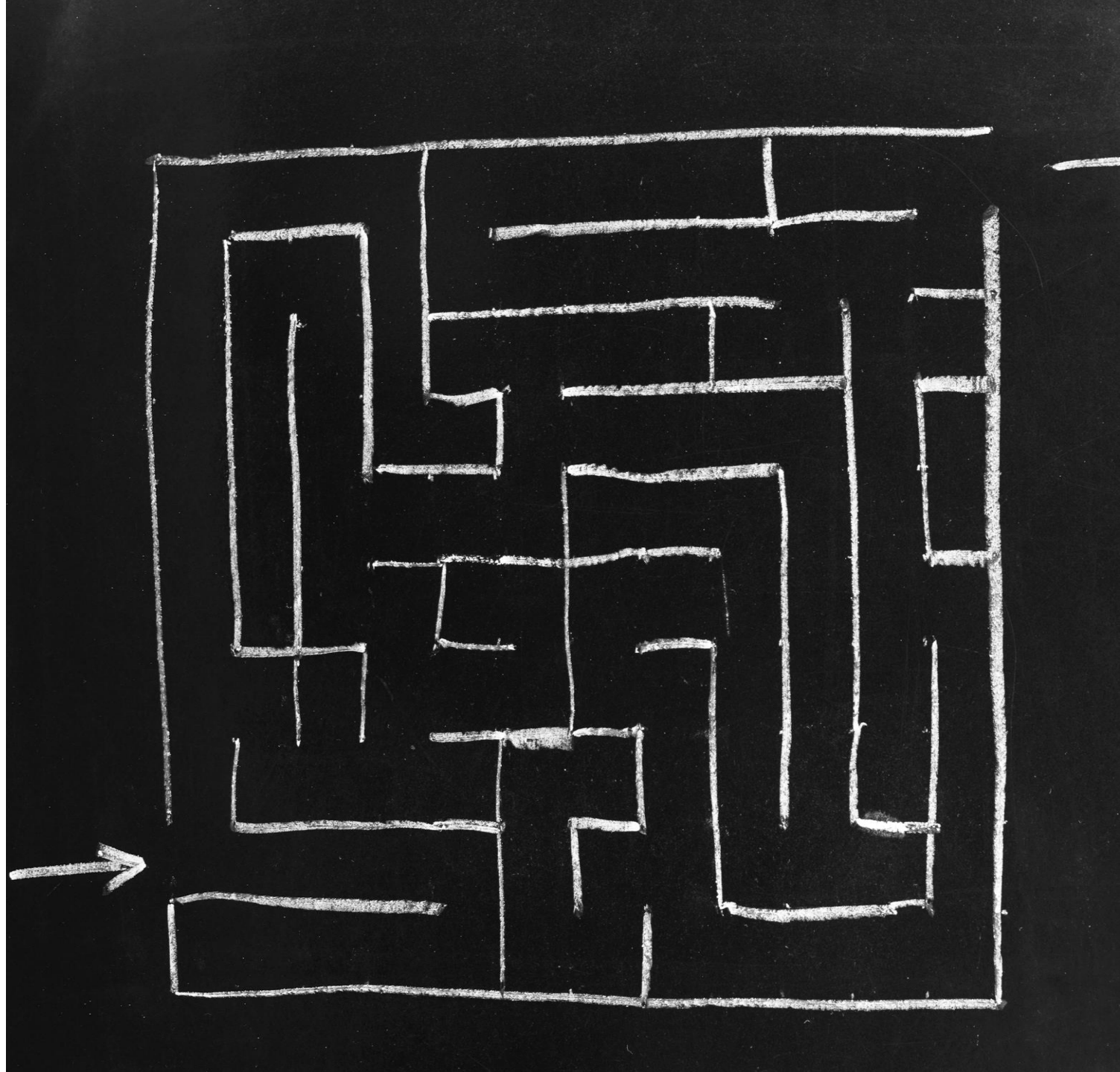
- Eliminate public education in favor of privatization
- Use government to suppress voting rights
- Eliminate the collective voice of voting blocks of groups of citizens
- Destroy unions and oppose pro-worker candidates' campaigns
- Undermine the power of government to act for the common good, i.e., social programs: Social Security, Medicare, SNAP, minimum wage, child labor laws, health insurance, environmental protections and regulations, food and drug safety, clean air and water, safety in the workplace, preserving public lands from privatization, free, public national parks, etc.

# WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF OUR ADVERSARIES?

- Diminish the public's confidence in government's ability to legislate efficiently and effectively
- Eliminate all government regulations and taxes on business and commerce
- Oppose state tax reform that favors the average citizen

# SHAPING FAR- RIGHT WING THOUGHT

- John C. Calhoun Senator from South Carolina
  - His Goals
  - His Play book
- James McGill Buchanan
- After the New Deal



# **Outside Groups Working to Suppress the Vote and/or control the schools**

**ALEC**

**The Policy Network**

**The Koch Brothers  
Network**

**The Cato Institute**

**The Libre Initiative**

**Donors Trust/Donors**

**Capital Fund**

**The Bradley**

**Foundation**

**Sinclair Broadcasting**

**Fox News**

**Stand for Children**

**StudentsFirst**

**Stand Together**

# INTRODUCTION: An Overview: Beginning with ALEC

**ALEC: (The American Legislative Exchange Council)** invites state legislators from around the country to a private retreat where legislators, licensed lobbyists, and “think tank” staff meet and work on ideas for legislation. After the retreat, the Policy Network endorses any ideas that reflect its philosophy. It is then engaged in direct communication with state legislators.

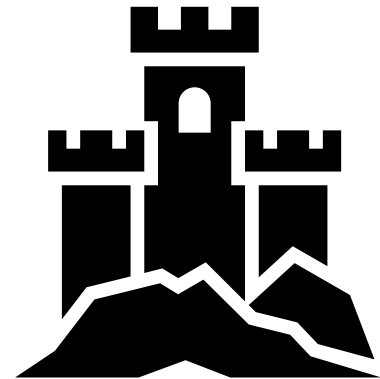
[ALEC's 50 Years of Trusted Policy Solutions \(Episode 6: Education Opportunity\) \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgtY26ia2bc&authuser=0)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgtY26ia2bc&authuser=0>



# THE KOCH EMPIRE

- Americans for Prosperity
- Freedom Partners (was previously Association for American Innovation)
- Freedom Partners Action Fund – a Super PAC
- Freedom Partners Chamber of Commerce
- Concerned Veterans for America – “one of the most muscular arms of the conservative Koch network
- Believe in People
- Stand Together
- yes. every kid



# The LIBRE Initiative

- Grass-roots group
- Under the umbrella of another group
- Goals
- [www.thelibreinstitute.org](http://www.thelibreinstitute.org)

## **The Reason Foundation**

- Think tank
- Funding
- What it does

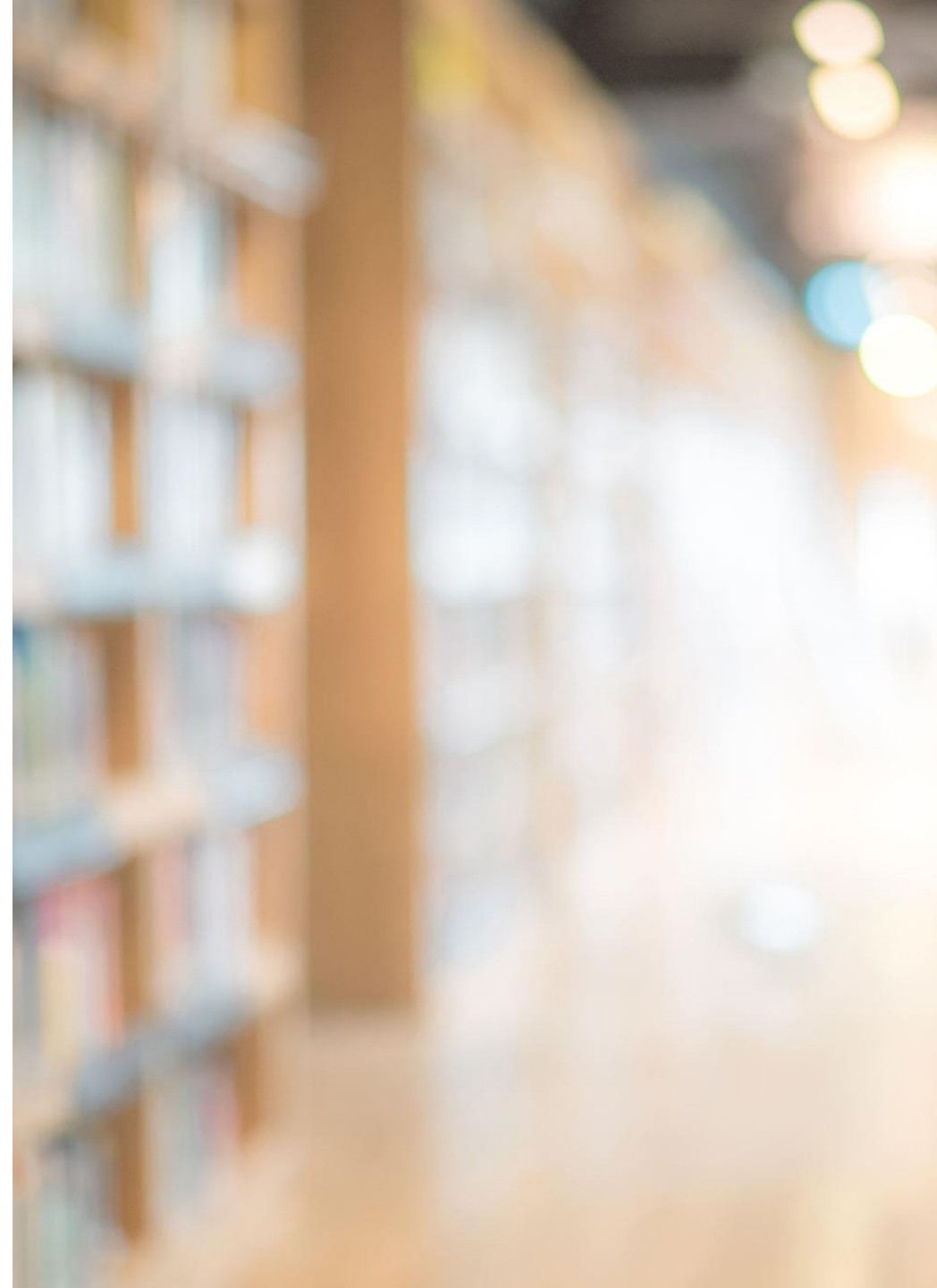
# HOW OUR ADVERSARIES IMPACT US AND OUR STUDENTS

Use their wealth and influence to:

- Sway public influence
- Promote right to work laws
- Promote private schools
- Elect politicians
- Weaken the middle class
- Support big business
- Support deregulation

Key players

- Jeff Yass
- Betsy DeVos



# WHY ATTACK PUBLIC EDUCATION?



- James Buchanan
- Create an enemy
- Shaping people's views
  
- Charles Koch
  - Influenced by A.F. Harper
- A. F. Harper's beliefs
- Attack Higher Education

# THE CATO INSTITUTE and EDUCATION: Public Schooling Battle Map

## Latest Battles:

- **Blanket Explicit Material Policy —Maine, November 28, 2023**
- **Riot Over Teacher Attending Pro-Israel Event —New York, November 20, 2023**
- **Flag Prohibition Policy —Ohio, November 16, 2023**
- **"All Are Welcome Here" Flag Fosters Tribalism? —Indiana, November 16, 2023**
- **Parental Notification Proposal Prompts Walkout —California, November 15, 2023**

<https://www.cato.org/public-schooling-battle-map>

# Why Control the Courts

## Henry Manne's approach

- Find Investors
- Protection and enhance of corporate profits
- Form close relationships

## George Mason University

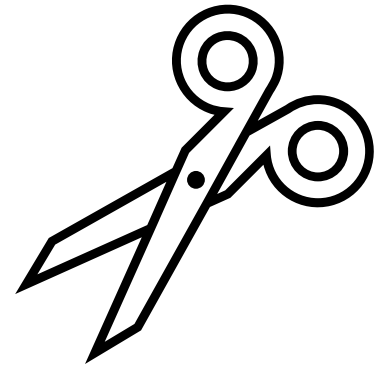
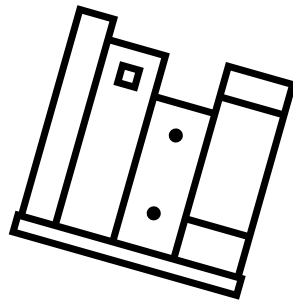
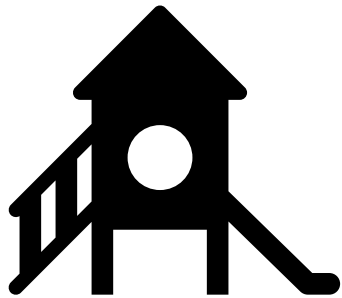
- Created a research and design center
- Outcome of influencing thought



# Influencing Thought at the State Level

## Policy Networks

- Limit unions
- Cut funds for public education
- Control curriculum
- Control how students identify selves at school



# OUR MEDIA ADVERSARIES: TV AND RADIO

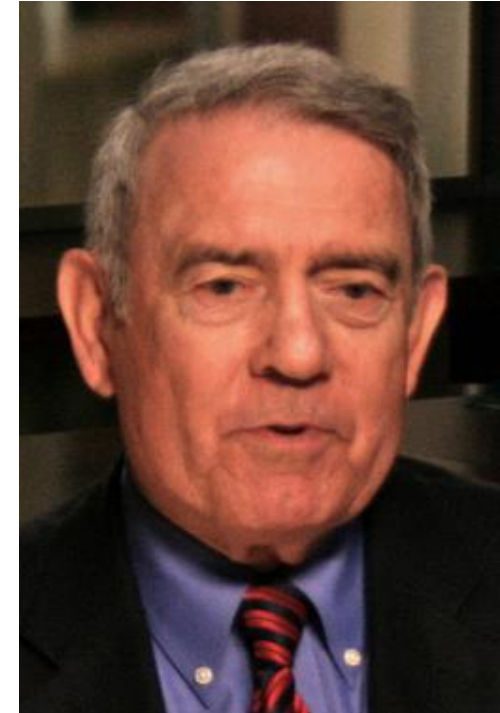
## Sinclair Broadcasting Group

## Rupert Murdoch and Fox News

Former news anchor, Dan Rather had a very pointed opinion about Sinclair Broadcasting.

**Rather, Dan.** “News Anchors looking into camera and reading a script handed down by a corporate overlord, words meant to obscure the truth not elucidate it, isn’t journalism. It’s propaganda. It’s Orwellian. A slippery slope to how despots wrest power, silence dissent, and oppress the masses.”


**2 April 2018. 1:54 PM. Tweet.**





Discussion

How is the control of the wealthiest few diminishing the collective rights of the majority of Americans?



# WHO FUNDS OUR ADVERSARIES?

THE BRADLEY FOUNDATION  
SEARLE FREEDOM TRUST

FORMER IL GOV. B. RAUNER

DEVOS FAMILY  
STAND TOGETHER (KOCH)

DONORS TRUST

ALEC  
FRANKLIN CENTER  
AMERICANS FOR PROSPERITY  
CATO INSTITUTE  
POLICY NETWORK  
HEARTLAND INSTITUTE  
NRA  
CENTER FOR SECURITY POLICY  
COMPETITIVE ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE  
CITIZENS FOR SOUND ECONOMY  
CLUB FOR GROWTH  
LIBERTARIAN PARTY  
HERITAGE FOUNDATION  
FREEDOM PARTNERS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
TC4TRUST  
CENTER TO PROTECT PATIENT RIGHTS  
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY/A. SCALIA LAW

ILLINOIS POLICY INSTITUTE



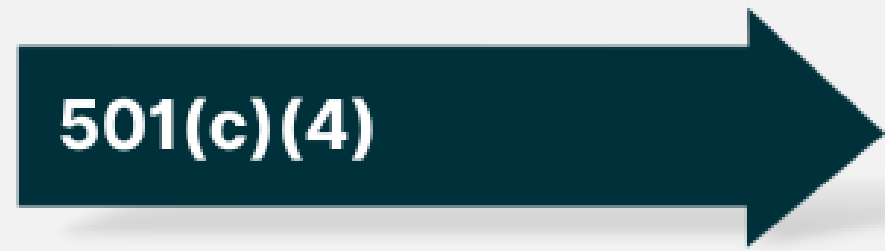
## 501(c)(3)

**Tax-Deductible Donations** <

**Less Restrictive Lobbying and  
Advocacy Limitations** <

**Cannot Endorse Political  
Candidates** <

**Activities Must Focus on  
Exempt Purposes** <



## 501(c)(4)

> **Unlimited Political  
Advocacy and Lobbying**

> **Ability to Accept Donations  
From Corporations**

> **Donations Are Not Tax-  
Deductible for the Donor**

> **Less Favorable Tax Treatment**

# Supporting Public Education in Our Communities

National  
Education  
Association

Illinois Families  
for Public  
Education

Raise Your Hand  
for Illinois Public  
Education

Rethinking  
Schools

UN KOCH My  
Campus

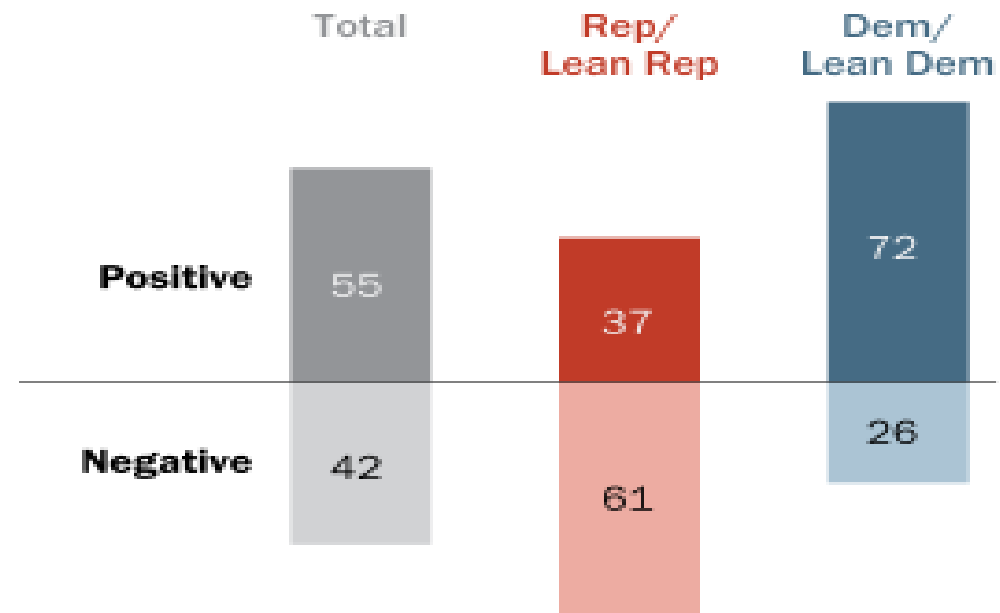
Wear Red for ED

Does it  
matter if you  
are a  
Republican or  
Democrat???

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**In 2022, a majority of Republicans said K-12 schools were having a negative effect on the U.S.**

*% saying K-12 public schools have a \_\_\_\_ effect on the way things are going in the country*



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.

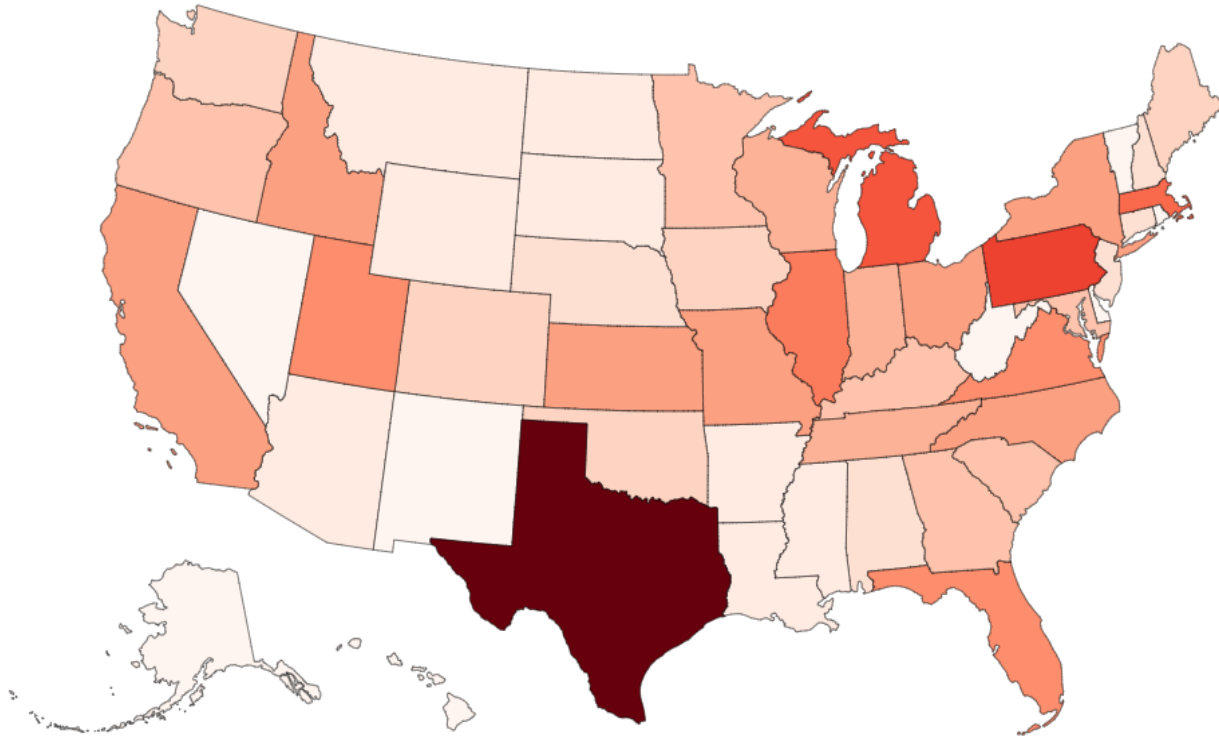
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 10-16, 2022.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

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## Attempts to Restrict Access to Books in all of 2022

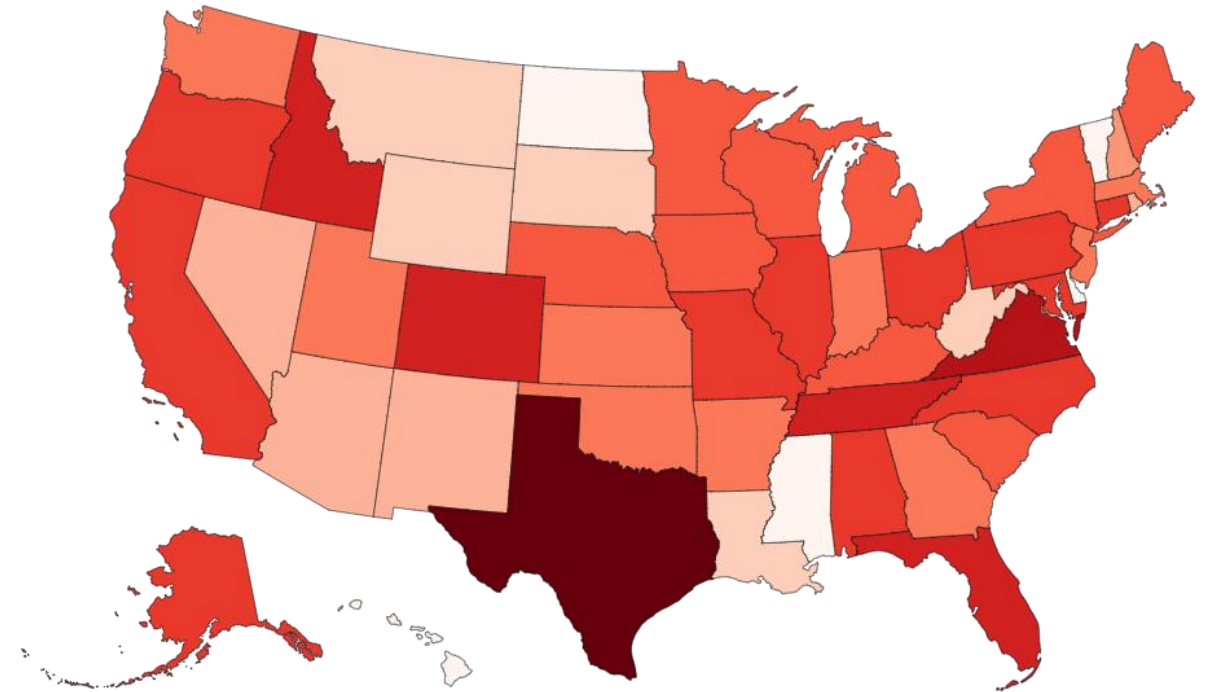
An attempt may include challenges to multiple titles

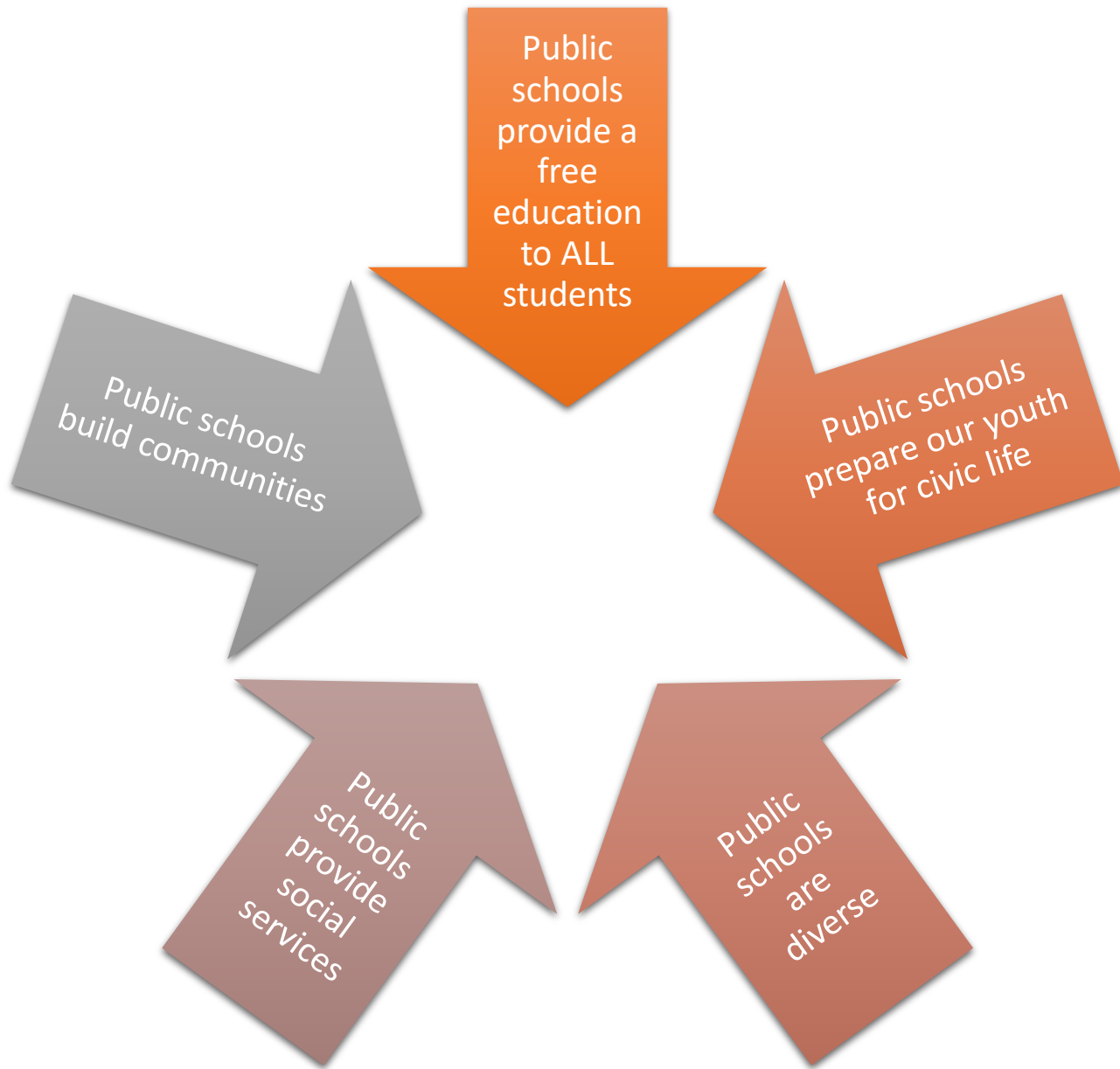


<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/arts/how-many-book-bans-were-attempted-in-your-state-use-this-map-to-find-out>

## Titles Challenged Between January 1 and August 31, 2023 (preliminary data)

Attempts to censor books during this period: 531.  
Total titles challenged in those attempts: 3923.  
A challenge may result in access being retained, restricted, or revoked at a school or public library.





# Time to Speak Up For Public Education





Discussion

The political  
atmosphere and the  
time is right for us to  
Stand Up! Speak Out! Be  
an Advocate!

So, What Will YOU Do?



Thank  
You

If you have any questions,  
please feel free to contact us!

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Diane Chapman

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Visit the IEA-Retired  
website.

[www.ieaneia.org/retired](http://www.ieaneia.org/retired)



**STAY  
INFORMED**

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