

Censorship Challenge Report – Quarter 4 FY2011

Millie Davis

This year as last, censorship challenge reports for the quarter wound down as the end of school approached, giving us some respite until August when schools return from the summer break and the challenges to summer reading list texts begin. We had 7 challenges, one fewer than Quarter 4 FY2011.

A quick summary of FY2012 year-long action against censorship shows that while we worked on 5 fewer challenges (32 in FY2012 vs. 37 in FY2011), the challenges concerned about the same number of texts (42+ in FY2012 vs. 44+ in FY2011). This fiscal year we interviewed twice as last, sent out information twice, and offered the policy help mentioned below in the description of the *Lord Loss* challenge. Fortunately we had no challenges to teaching methodology this year compared to 2 during FY2011. While I'd love to think that our lower reported challenge numbers mean that fewer texts are being challenged in schools, that is hardly the case as the April 2012 [American Library Association's State of American Libraries Report](#) indicated.

During Quarter 4 FY2012 we worked on challenges to some oft-challenged books: *Bastard Out of Carolina*, *Looking for Alaska*, and *The Hunger Games*. We worked on two challenges with the National Coalition Against Censorship and other first amendment groups. One of these, [Bastard Out of Carolina](#), was banned in California by a 3-2 board vote. The other, [The Family Book](#), a text in an elementary curriculum for diversity, tolerance, and anti-bullying, was [banned in a small town in Illinois](#). [Little, Brown Books for Young Readers](#) signed on the letter of support for *The Family Book*, which they had published. The first amendment groups we worked with on both challenges include National Coalition Against Censorship ([NCAC](#)), the American Library Association ([ALA](#)), the American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression ([ABFFE](#)), the Association of American Publishers ([AAP](#)), the [PEN American Center](#), the Independent Book Publishers Association ([IBPA](#)), The American Society of Journalists and Authors ([ASJA](#)), the Anti-Defamation League ([ADL](#)), the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund ([CBLDF](#)), and the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators ([SCBWI](#)).

One other challenge during Quarter 4, *Lord Loss*, was interesting because of the [positive press coverage it received](#), emphasizing how well the new school policy that our office had offered advice about writing and adopting had worked.

Below is a chart comparing the Quarter 4 FY2012 and the Quarter 4 FY2011 challenges and numbers of challenged texts. Below that a list of the works challenged this quarter.

CENSORSHIP CHALLENGES COMPARISON Q2 FY11 AND Q2 FY10

A few things to know as you compare the numbers are the following:

- Number of challenges = number of individuals who reported challenges.
- Number of works challenged is usually higher because often challenges involve more than one work.
- The Censorship Challenge Reports by quarter are posted on the NCTE website. See <http://www.ncte.org/action/anti-censorship/reports>

April 2012	May 2012	June 2012	Q4 FY2012 Totals
3 challenges/4 works	0 challenges	4 challenges/4 works	7 challenges/8 works
April 2011	May 2011	June 2011	Q4 FY2011 Totals
3 challenges/3 works	6 challenges/6 works/1 request for information	0 challenges	8 challenges/ 9 works

Bastard Out of Carolina, Dorothy Allison (12th AP, CA), “characters are not positive role models.” Signed on letter with NCAC and Others. **Board voted 3-2 not to adopt book.**

The Family Book, Todd Parr (Elementary Diversity, Tolerance, and Bullying Curriculum, IL). Religious and ideological objections to content, particularly a page which says that some families have two moms or two dads. **Book Banned from Curriculum as “age inappropriate” for elementary school.**

The Hunger Games, Suzanne Collins (7th Grade English, MN). **Book retained in classroom.**

Looking for Alaska, John Green (11th Grade Advanced, AL). In appropriate for high school students based on the language, sexual scenes, and possible suicide. Sent rationale and resources. **Principal agreed to keep as summer reading selection but to offer an alternative text to any who object.**

Lord Loss, Darren Shan (Junior High School Library, WY). promoted inappropriate values. **Retained.**

Thirteen Reasons Why, Jay Asher (OH)

A Thousand Splendid Suns, Khaled Hosseini (7th Grade English, MN). **Book retained in classroom.**

Twisted, Halse Anderson (FL).