

# **Pandora's Box: How Expanded Challenge Ability Shapes Florida School Media Specialists' Propensity to Self-Censor LGBTQ+-themed Literature**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In 2017 Florida passed into law House Bill 989, which extended the right to challenge instructional and library materials from traditional stakeholders such as parents and school staff to all Florida residents. Given the recent increase in challenges to diverse materials across the nation, the proposed research seeks to shed light on how the law has impacted self-censorship practices among Florida school media specialists.

Using a mixed-methods approach consisting of surveys of and interviews with Florida school media specialists and informed by Noelle-Neumann's Spiral of Silence Theory, the proposed research seeks to provide insight into how various factors, including increased political polarization, the rise of parental rights organizations, potential deficits in pertinent legal doctrine, and the ability of non-stakeholders to challenge school library materials, may influence the propensity of Florida school librarians to engage in self-censorship, particularly concerning LGBTQ+-themed children's and young adult literature.

## **ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS**

School libraries; intellectual freedom; social justice; censorship.

## **AUTHOR KEYWORDS**

LGBTQ+ literature; First Amendment; challenges; Florida.