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In Banned Books Week, anti-censorship activist Pat LaMarche reflects on the power of books and the importance of celebrating reading.

If you're a Vonnegut fan, or a Saul Bellow, Ray Bradbury, Alex Haley fan -- to name a few -- birth control exists but its use is forbidden. In the future that Vonnegut expounds, "sometimes subversive is what's called for when you have people killing each other in the street.

Reagan and his paternalistic colleagues were thwarted in their attempt to save blind readers' access to their favorite magazines. In the mid-1980s, blind readers accused the Reagan administration of planning to shut down the Gail Borden National Library and take away their reading materials. In fact, the Obama administration is currently working on a plan to close the library.

Efforts have been made to keep adult magazines like Playboy out of schools and libraries. In 1965, the American Library Association and the American Federation of Teachers banded together to fight against the proposed restrictions. Despite the American Library Association's efforts, Congress passed the Censorship in Schools Act of 1965, which prohibited federal funding for any school or library that allows the distribution of adult materials to minors. This law has been used to ban books and magazines that are not considered obscene, but are deemed "unsuitable" for minors.

The law has been interpreted broadly to include materials that are not explicitly obscene but are considered to be "objectionable," "unsuitable," or "unhealthy." This has led to the banning of a wide range of materials, including books, magazines, and even public domain books.

In 2013, Jennifer O'Brien, Serials and Government Documents Librarian for the National Library of Medicine, published a report on the censorship of the internet. The report found that censorship of the internet is still a problem in many countries, and that efforts to block access to information are increasing in many parts of the world.

O'Brien says that the Internet has changed the discussion of censorship as the "obscene" material that was once only available in print is now available on the Internet. However, the Internet is still subject to censorship, and many countries have laws that make it illegal to access certain websites.

"Teachers or librarians may just be self-censoring. And not because they don't want to accept what she's read doesn't mean O'Brien should be shielding others from what they don't want to read," O'Brien said. "And that's why we need to be vigilant in protecting the First Amendment rights of all Americans."
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