

Submitter: Cathy Camper
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1583

As an Arab American children's author, librarian and Oregonian, I strongly support this bill which prohibits discrimination when selecting textbooks, instructional materials, program materials or library books that are used in the public schools of Oregon. Oregon students and all Oregonians deserve full access to information about the world and about themselves. Authors, librarians, educators and parents should not face harassment or discrimination for providing others with information they seek.

Specifically as the bill states, information needs to be available to all, about people, histories and cultures identified as Native American, of European, African, Asian, Pacific Island, Chicano, Latino, Middle Eastern or Jewish descent; have disabilities; are immigrants or refugees; or are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

This bill allows local schools and school boards the opportunity to choose curriculum materials, and includes parental involvement.

Importantly, this bill does not allow a board or a person to choose or not choose materials that are used in a school when the choice is discrimination, but creates a statewide standard insuring freedom of information to both users of that information, for example students and library users, as well as creators and providers of that information, for example librarians, educators and authors. It also stands in the face of further discrimination towards marginalized groups, whoever they might be, by allowing people the ability to seek information about their histories and themselves. I urge you to support this bill and freedom of information in Oregon.