

Submitter: April Younglove
On Behalf Of: Oregon children
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1583

As a librarian with extensive experience in both school and public libraries, I am writing to express my strong support for SB1583. This bill addresses a crucial aspect of education: the representation of diverse voices in instructional materials. Having witnessed firsthand the profound impact of representation on students, particularly those from minority groups, I firmly believe that SB1583 is a step in the right direction for promoting inclusivity and understanding in our educational system.

In school libraries, I have seen how positive media representation can significantly enhance the self-esteem of students belonging to marginalized groups. When young learners see themselves reflected positively in the books they read and the materials they study, it fosters a sense of validation and belonging that is essential for their academic and personal development. Furthermore, exposure to diverse perspectives through media representation can help break down stereotypes and promote empathy and understanding among students.

SB1583's emphasis on including the roles and contributions of individuals from various backgrounds in American history and government textbooks is not only a matter of representation but also an important step towards combating discrimination. By ensuring that instructional materials adequately address the diverse economic, political, and social contributions of Native American people, individuals of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, those with disabilities, immigrants, refugees, and LGBTQ+ individuals, we are providing students with a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of our history and society.

It is essential to note that SB1583 does not promote discrimination or favoritism; rather, it seeks to rectify historical omissions and biases by ensuring that all students have access to a curriculum that accurately reflects the richness and complexity of American society.

In conclusion, I urge the members of the Oregon Senate to support SB1583. By adopting textbooks and instructional materials that include diverse voices and contributions from individuals from all backgrounds, we can create a more equitable and inclusive educational environment for all students.

Thank you for considering my testimony.