

Submitter: LuCinda Gustavson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1583

I support this bill. I am a public librarian serving kids and teens. Our children need to see and read books that include them and their family. They need to know that people like them are important and have a place in our history, in our present and in our future. I vividly remember the day a small black boy discovered a book about black astronauts. His eyes lit up, he hugged the book to his chest, and he said "He looks like me! Can I take this book home?" All children should be able to see themselves in the textbooks and history of this state and country.

Many people criticize LGBTQ+ books as being pornographic. I say they give clear explanations about the realities of being LGBTQ+. Our kids have questions. They need answers. They may be embarrassed to go to a parent, or may not have a parent who is willing to even hear their questions. They can find the answers to their questions within the safety of the pages of a book. Or, they will look for answers from their friends, on the street, and sadly, many times, by damaging experience. In the safety of a book, kids can not only experience, vicariously, different situations, they can also learn the consequences of bad choices, all without risking their own futures, health and safety. They will be able to make better choices if they have the information they need to make those choices.