

February 8, 2024

Linden How
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Dear Senator Frederick and Representative Sanchez,

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your legislative efforts towards SB 1583. As an academic librarian and educator, I have firsthand experience and knowledge of the importance of accessibility to library materials that reflect and/or portray diverse perspectives, voices, and lived experiences. I believe our country (and thus our state) is at a turning point in history, where we are navigating challenges to the very foundations of our society that have been built by the hands of countless visionaries. As Oregonians and Americans, we need to reject any attempt to undermine our progress, especially in terms of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The recent bans to books and other content that center marginalized voices and experiences are representative of a desire to become the worst we can be, rather than the best. It is especially asinine that the rights of elementary, secondary, and post-secondary learners are being targeted, because these are the creators and stewards of our future. They NEED the tools and resources that help them understand the reality of this world so that they may be effective leaders and change-makers. I join many, many others in affirming learners' rights to learn without barriers or exclusions to the education they seek.

This is also a personal issue to me, as a queer woman who grew up without access to materials that would have educated me and affirmed my identity. As a result, I was closeted until my 30s, afraid to be who I now know I am. It's my deepest desire that this experience is not replicated for the generations that come after mine. I believe SB 1583 will prevent these blatantly bigoted censorship attempts from succeeding.

Thank you for your time, and your dedication to affirming the civil rights of Oregonians.

Sincerely,
Linden How