

Oregon Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301
February 12, 2024

To the Esteemed Chair, Vice Chair, and Esteemed Members of the Committee,

As a former high school teacher, I am supporting SB 1583 which will prevent discrimination when selecting textbooks, instructional materials, program materials, or library books in public schools and I hope that you will vote to support the bill when it comes up for a vote (in committee/on the floor).

SB1583 brings needed clarity to help schools and school boards comply with the prohibition on discrimination required by ORS 659.850.

The US is experiencing an explosion of attempts to censor library and curriculum materials in our public schools, and Oregon is no exception.

Many of these attempts are blatant in their opposition to LGBTQ+ materials. These censorship attempts intend to limit the materials available to Oregon students based solely on the constitutionally protected viewpoints of those materials. I believe SB 1583 will help prevent these book bans and removal attempts.

As a former teacher, I know it is important for students to see themselves reflected in their community. I believe it is critical to carefully select books, magazines, educational videos, and experiences that reflect our student populations in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. I cannot stress enough, how vital it is for our students to see themselves included in materials. Use of materials that showcase people from all walks of life really does build a sense of community and inclusion. It helps marginalized students see how they can positively participate in our society. It helps spread familiarity and awareness of the variety and texture of our community to those who are unaware. Positive representation helps break down barriers and builds cohesion for our future.

I want to ensure that important educational texts and materials are available to those students who need them.

Please pass SB 1583 with the proposed amendment from the Oregon Library Association.

Thank you for your time,
Crystal Tompkins