

Submitter: Lisa Kelz
On Behalf Of: all our kids
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1583

TO: Senate Committee on Education

FROM: Lisa Kelz

RE: Support for SB1583

Date: 02/12/2024

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber & and Members of the Senate Committee on Education,

My name is Lisa and I am writing to urge you to support SB1583, which will prohibit discrimination based on the race, religion, ability, country of origin, sexuality, or gender of the individuals featured in the content of educational and library materials in public elementary and secondary schools in Oregon.

In Oregon, we have seen countless efforts to ban books that feature LGBTQIA2S+ topics or individuals and restrict access for students to understand the positive contributions of individuals of marginalized identities who have contributed to our society. This bill creates a statewide standard ensuring freedom of information both to users of that information, as well as providers of that information, for example librarians and educators. It also ensures people have access to accurate and representative information about their histories, communities and selves, and creates more room for understanding over prejudice in Oregon.

As a Registered Nurse I have worked in the health care field in Oregon for 45 years. I worked in various community health settings and found the most interesting and satisfying was working with youth, particularly teenagers, around preventative health issues. The world is big and fast these days, and teenagers are bombarded by media messages from radio, TV, movies, advertisements, magazines, and other students for that matter. Students are all very different; different sizes, shapes, ethnic backgrounds, socioeconomic status, genders, and sexual orientations. Our communities, schools and libraries need to be there for ALL our kids. They need our help to navigate through modern society, as complicated and confusing as it is for some students. In the position of school nurse, students often shared with me their concerns, worries, fears about their lives and had many health questions. Books have always been a way to learn, to hear stories of others' lives, that can teach empathy and understanding. I have seen smart, kind students distraught and even suicidal because they feel they have nowhere to turn. There are times when a book is a lifeline...when a young person feels so different, separate and alone then finds out they are not alone after all. I support this bill because I know young people need access and have a right to have information and education, about all histories and cultures, and this access should not be based on political whims but be steadfast and stable for everyone's benefit.

SB1583 does not change any individual parent's or guardian's right to monitor or

oversee what their own children read or view. It does protect the rights of ALL parents and guardians for their children to have access to diverse representation in materials and history taught in the school setting.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my story today. We hope you will vote YES to support and advance SB1583.

Thank you, Sincerely