



Beth Chvilicek, Policy Outreach Coordinator
Unite Oregon
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In support of SB 1583

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Beth Chvilicek, I use they/them pronouns, and I am a Policy Outreach Coordinator at Unite Oregon. We are a state-wide organization advocating for immigrants, refugees, people of color, people experiencing poverty, and rural communities. I am testifying today on behalf of Unite Oregon and our members, both urban and rural, to share our support for SB 1583.

Across the nation, there has been an increase in books being banned from libraries and schools. Overwhelmingly, these books are either written by LGBTQ+ folks and authors of color *or* written about LGBTQ+ characters and people of color. Oregon is no exception to this. By banning books, schools and libraries are ridding students of the ability to identify themselves in the characters that they know and love. They rid students of the opportunity to identify their struggles with beloved characters. Often, kids of color and young queer and trans folks are facing very complex issues that straight, cisgender and white folks may not understand. Because of this, books are a critical way for students to learn about and navigate their issues. Limiting kid's access to information does not make the issue go away, it just isolates them and makes it so that kids have fewer resources to grow and learn from. Additionally, many of the materials being banned pertain to race and critical race theory. As an organization that is led by and works for immigrants, refugees, and people of color, we know that the harm of banning such materials perpetuates harm on all communities of color, especially kids.

Illinois passed a bill similar to this one in June 2023. We urge you to follow their lead and support SB 1583.