

February 13, 2024

Senate Committee on Education, and all Oregonians,

During the last year alone, we have seen an unfathomable uptick in bans and censorship of books and other materials in our school classrooms, libraries and learning spaces. Based on findings from the [Oregon Intellectual Freedom Clearinghouse 2023 Report](#), 46 challenge incidents were reported in Oregon between July 2022 and June 2023, with 93 titles challenged in those incidents. This far exceeds the previous record of 70 titles challenged in 1992-1993. This regression is concerning when compared to the progress of other civil liberties and advancements in education over the course of the last 30 years.

It is evident from these numbers that the attack on identity affirming books and materials has escalated to unprecedented heights. While recent banning efforts have been focused on materials that explore, honor or amplify gender, orientation and racial and/or ethnic experiences, the expurgation of representation will not end there. The erasure of the breadth of complexity and beauty that diverse individualism offers will continue. The lack of consideration given to how the homogenous winnowing of representation in materials available to and for youth will shape capacity and understanding of empathy and tolerance in current and future generations is a dangerous and risky oversight.

That is why support for [SB 1583](#), proposed by Senator Fredrick, is imperative. This bill will forbid schools to choose, or renounce, the selection of materials for curricular, instructional, library or other school related purposes based on if they discuss or depict a [protected class of people](#). Discriminatory treatment of people from these protected classes is already unlawful in the state of Oregon, and this bill just stands to clarify that the illegality of these discriminatory practices should also span to protect materials being selected for, and used in, schools.

This call for support is directed at anyone who holds an identity that is important to them. This is an ask of anyone who feels that their experiences, stories and perspectives matter. Anyone who has a child in their life with their own independent thoughts, ideas and personalities that deserve to be seen and nurtured, we need your support. The defining characteristics that make each of us who we are as human beings are in jeopardy of being targeted and silenced.

The things that make you special and unique matter. You deserve to see these things positively reflected and represented in the spaces and materials around you. Every single person is deserving of this same right. Please join us in supporting SB 1583 so that together we can foster, cultivate and delight in the remarkable differences, similarities, and the extraordinary intersections of both, that make the human experience something to celebrate.

With Sincerity and Thanks,



Ericka Brunson-Rochette

Signing on behalf of: Oregon Library Association's EDI & Anti-Racism Committee