

Submitter: Charles D
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1583

I am writing in support of SB 1583 as a librarian and a lifelong Oregonian. Book banning is a harmful and oppressive practice, and every student deserves to have access to educational resources that accurately reflect the world and the many people in it. Knowledge is power, and restricting access to sources of knowledge disempowers people. Given the fact that such restrictions largely focus on LGBTQ+ materials and materials regarding other marginalized groups, these restrictions are disempowering groups of people that are already in disadvantaged positions within our society and culture. Library censorship is not a matter of protecting people, but rather a matter of causing harm. It conveys the message that certain people don't deserve to be seen or heard, that they are unsightly and deserving of shame, and that they shouldn't exist at all. When book bans are enacted, students pick up on these messages, and they are taught shame and fear and hatred. Conversely, when students are able to see themselves reflected in the books they read and the resources they access, they are not only better able to connect with the material and engage with it in meaningful ways, but they are also more likely to be inspired and empowered by them.

As a librarian, I believe that it is critical to carefully select resources that reflect local populations culturally, historically, and linguistically. This is especially important for school libraries, as centers of learning for future generations. Do we as Oregonians and Americans really want to disempower our children through misinformation, shame, and fear? Or do we want to inspire them, educate them, and empower them with resources that accurately reflect the diversity of the world and the people in it? Personally, I want our schools to support their students and provide them with a quality education through the provision of vital educational texts and resources, unrestricted by discriminatory groups and ideologies. With the rise of book bans and library censorship throughout the U.S., SB 1583 is a necessary bill to protect students from the harmful practices of censorship, and the hatred and bigotry that support them.