

Submitter: S H
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1583

Dear Senate Committee on Education, I urge you to support SB1583. In a democracy, public schools are extremely important institutions because democracies benefit and succeed only when the electorate is well educated in critical thinking as well as knowledge of facts. And those facts must be complete and truthful - not "white-washed" or omitted. History can be painful to acknowledge, but that's how people are educated- by facing up to the truth, not ignoring it. And science can be challenging, but it can't be denied.

If discrimination against any kind of minority group is allowed in teaching materials, all students will be deprived of knowledge of the real world, which is actually populated with all kinds of people. Acknowledging and learning about diverse people does not recruit or transform others into something they are not. That is a baseless fear. Instead it makes schools welcoming places where all kids can be who they are.

My second concern about allowing discrimination in teaching materials relates to this question... what is the agenda of those who are discriminating? Often it appears to be a religious agenda and the US and State of Oregon both guarantee freedom of religion and freedom from religion, in that the state may not promote any one religion above any others. No one should impose their religious beliefs on others in public institutions and spaces.

In these days when democracy itself might be endangered, keep our public schools free from discrimination because they are vital in preserving our democratic way of life.

Sincerely, S. H. Colton Oregon