

Submitter: Clare Sobotka  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure: SB1583

I am supporting SB 1583 to prevent discrimination when selecting textbooks, instructional materials, program materials or library books in public schools and hope that you will vote to support the bill when it comes up for a vote.

As a librarian and a reader, I know it is important for students to see themselves reflected in their community. Among the many benefits mentioned by other letter writers, it can help a child feel hope and a sense that their community is worth building and working hard for. It is equally important that students experience and build empathy for lives that are different from their own, so that they see others as partners in building a world of possibility, not just unknown strangers to be tolerated and worked around. These are the skills needed to maintain and enrich our democracy, alongside traditional subjects like writing and math.

This bill stops the banning of books and other materials based on discrimination. That does not mean schools need to host every book under the sun. Schools are still responsible for and have the right to select age-appropriate material. All teachers, librarians, and school administrators I know who work with children have studied child development and work hard to select appropriate material, and I have not seen proof that our schools are dens of iniquity.

This bill does not prevent parents from having a say in what their child reads, but it will protect the rights of all to access enriching material. Please pass SB 1583 with the proposed amendment from the Oregon Library Association.