

Senate Committee on Education  
Re: testimony in support of SB 1583

Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber and members of the committee,

My name is Elliott Orrin Hinkle, I'm the Principal and Founder of Unicorn Solutions LLC, I reside in Multnomah county, and my work is focused on creating positive futures for LGBTQIA2S+ youth and families impacted by child welfare and mental health systems. I'm a transgender person who has benefited from libraries and their equal and easy access to information.

SB1583 is necessary to me and my community because finding texts and images that represented who I am in school and libraries was incredibly hard and left the door open to find information in places that wasn't vetted, reputable, or even safe such as the internet. Libraries and the books inside them are a place to find out more about oneself, the history of the community, and to better understand those different from ourselves.

I'm regularly asked by professionals and families for recommendations on texts and research to help support parents loving and affirming their children and youth. Libraries and librarians have been so helpful in getting the best and right information to support them.

In May 2023 I personally experienced doxxing, death threats, and the cancellation of a pride celebration of LGBTQ GSA students in Portland in part because they would have had access to learn more about themselves via literature like "A Kids Co" books that teach about potentially complex social and identity topics in ways that are accessible to youth and their families.

It was unexpected to live in Portland Oregon and experience this level of attack and pushback but it was also informative how hard folks are working to simply stop access to information, a freedom of choice issue that all parents should have the ability to decide what is right for their family, not everyone else's.

Last year I was also able to attend a local elementary's GSA club and talk with their members about banned books and the importance of access to information and what I found in that time was that youth are hungry for information and are keenly aware that as text about them diminishes, that correlates to people wanting to erase them, too. This messaging and erasure plays a role in significantly high suicide attempts and suicidal ideation. **The Trevor Project found in 2022 that 44% of Oregon's LGBTQ youth considered suicide in the past year including 54% of trans and nonbinary youth. 14%**

**of LGBTQ youth in Oregon attempted suicide in that past year, including 19% of trans and nonbinary youth.**

For direction, the [American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights](#) and [Schools and Minor's rights](#) lend a helpful direction to how to think about this important issue informed by those who know best and have long before any of us navigated these issues, thoughtfully.

School libraries are having to defend themselves against the removal particularly of information about minority populations like LGBTQ people, communities of color, and more - but they aren't having to navigate the fight for removal of faith-based texts, political texts. I personally have no desire to discriminately pull texts about people different from myself from libraries because I learned a lot about lifestyles and viewpoints that are different from my own because of having access, and appreciate that as it's been part of my growth and development. We may not agree on everything but I do appreciate being able to understand those different than me, so why would we restrict access for folks to learn about who they are the communities they identify with, or don't.

I urge you to support SB 1583.

Best,  
Elliott Orrin Hinkle