

Submitter: Herlinda Corn
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1583

February 13, 2024

Dear Senate Committee On Education:

Please accept the following letter in support of SB1583. Thank you for proposing a measure that aims to protect from discriminatory censorship based on race, national origin, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, physical or mental disability, military status, or marital or family status.

I write to you as a person of color who recently relocated to the State of Oregon. Many marginalized communities see reading as a privilege. This is partly because they have been historically excluded from the privilege of access to literacy education. I come from a background where reading for pleasure or education was not accessible while growing up. This is in part because parents are working hard to survive and provide basic needs such as food and shelter. For many of us, our first interaction with books comes from our teachers, school and/or public librarians. It is they who introduce us to new worlds, ideas, different points of view; all the things that make us a well-rounded member of society. A prohibition of books is not only a form of discrimination, but goes against the basic rights established by our founding fathers: freedom of speech. I write to you as a person who, even without equal access to books, has been able to pursue higher education through use of public school resources that were unrestricted and uncensored.

I am in support of Senate Bill 1583 to prevent school boards and districts from deciding what book or textbooks are accessible. Failure to pass SB1583, will give a select few the power to subjectively discriminate our reading options based on their point of view. Regardless of their personal views, all books should be accessible to everyone without reservations. We are a community of free will and should be given the option to decide what to read or study. This is exclusively my choice to make and do not want that taken away. As such, this choice should not be taken away from anyone.

“In America, the First Amendment of our Constitution states that freedom begins with our capacity to share and access ideas—even, and maybe especially, the ones we disagree with,” - Barack Obama

Thank you,