

Submitter: Crystal Garcia
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1583

I am writing in support of SB1583, which will prevent discrimination in selecting textbooks, instructional materials, program materials or library books in public schools.

As a first-generation Mexican American and librarian, I firmly believe in the importance of diversity in literature. As a young child I struggled with reading until I connected with a book series I found in my school library that featured characters who resembled my cultural background, whose experience validated my own, and whose hair looked like mine. This one series turned me into an avid reader, which led me again and again to libraries, and eventually to a career in professional librarianship— such is the transformative power of representation in literature.

It is disheartening to see the increasing number of book challenges and bans that center around books by or about people of color. Restricting access to these vital representations deprives readers of the opportunity to connect with stories that reflect and validate their own identities, which in turn serves to limit rather than empower.

Please vote yes on SB1583 and let Oregon lead the way in dismantling barriers to diverse literature in classrooms and school libraries by fostering inclusivity and understanding for all.