

Submitter: George McNair  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure: SB1583

Mr. Chair and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to give this testimony.

I oppose Senate Bill 1583 and ask that you do not move it forward.

First, I question the need for this legislation. On what basis has it been determined that there is active discrimination today that demands legislation to remedy and cannot be remedied by other means?

Third, Section 5 is, frankly, laughable. What "emergency" is there? Has this not become the hallmark of the recent legislative bills - to call everything an "emergency"? If this continues it simply demonstrates that many have no idea what an emergency actually is, and when one does really come it will be treated the same as everything else. (I would be in favor of strict qualifications and justifications for using the "emergency" clause in any new legislation!)

Third, the nature and likely result of this bill is disturbing.

Our children are precious, and their minds are precious.

Education did not fail you or I, did it? On what basis do we think that curriculums established long ago - call them "old fashioned" or not - are somehow failing our children? Did you turn out bad? Did I? It would seem by this and other such legislation that you would think so.

Schools should reflect the communities they serve. School boards must have the ability to tailor the curriculum to the communities they serve. This bill changes that.

In the digest it is said, "Digest: This Act does not allow a board or a person to choose or not choose materials that are used in a school when the choice is discrimination."

Really? Who determines what is discriminatory?

This is a day where anything not liked is being said to be "discrimination!" Look at the media and you'll see so. This bill will not serve to minimize discrimination or eliminate it, but to enhance it.

I am very disturbed by the increase in discrimination which has been ushered in by ORS 337.260 and other related acts. The heightened attention toward what a person believes or not and where they originate from or not in such forms of legislation has exalted those things above the actual fact that we are all people, and respect for one another should be given in love as one human to another - one person to another. Two people who believe differently can show respect for one another.

If passed this bill is going to further divide our state. Persons who believe questionable material and even objectionable material is wrong and should not be put before our malleable children are likely to pull their children out of public schools in even greater numbers than we've seen so far. Yet, "they're discriminating", you might say. Not so! They are doing what is right for the child, and at a great personal cost to them.

If this bill is passed you will be further warping our education system to produce children who are discriminatory against those who hold opinions that differ from you. Is that the society you want to live in - one where we cannot agree to disagree, and where for the sake of a minority discriminate against the majority?

It is not the society I want to live in, and it is not the nature of this state nor of this great nation of America - a nation that has seen greatness unravelling by divisions over decisions such as what you are trying to codify into law in this bill.

This is a time for the courageous to be courageous and to take a stand for what is good. What do you hold to be good? What stand will you take?

As for me, I oppose this bill and 2019 HB 2023 and all the similar bills and products of them like ORS 337.260 that have come from them. I believe we can live peacefully together with differences in opinion, but this sort of legislation will not do that... this sort of legislation will simply increase the division and discrimination in ways that are not acknowledged at all in this bill.

I do hope that you have a change of heart about this bill, Mr. Chair, of which you are a sponsor.

With regard, George McNair