

Submitter: Bradley Bettis
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.

Why do we need this legislation? On what basis has it been determined that there is active discrimination currently, that demands legislation to remedy and cannot be addressed by other means?

Section 5 is concerning. What "emergency" is there? Many recent legislative bills - have been called an "emergency"? If this continues there will be no metric for a true emergency. It is the boy crying wolf. This word is overused and losing its credibility. (I am in favor of strict qualifications and justifications for using the "emergency" clause in any new legislation!)

The nature and outcome of this bill is disturbing.

Our children are precious, and their minds are precious.

I do not believe education failed us. What evidence do you have that curriculum established long ago - often labeled "old fashioned" or - are failing our children?

Schools must reflect the communities they serve. School boards need to be able 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."

Who determines what is discriminatory?

We live in a time where anything not liked is called "discrimination!" The media is full of this. This bill does not minimize discrimination or eliminate it, but rather enhances it.

I am disturbed by the increase of discrimination which ORS 337.260 and other related acts has resulted in. 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 passes you will further warp our education system weakening the ability of our children to navigate life differences and honor those who hold different opinions. 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 you have a change of heart about this bill, Mr. Chair, which you sponsored.