

Submitter: M J
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1583

Dear Senate Committee on Education,

I am writing in support of SB 1583 that will prevent discrimination when selecting textbooks, instructional materials, program materials or library books in public schools. I strongly urge you to vote to support this bill when it comes up in committee and on the floor.

SB 1583 brings needed clarity to help schools and school boards comply with the prohibition on discrimination required by ORS 659.850. It will prevent a minority of voices from making choices for other people's children.

The United States is experiencing an explosion of attempts to censor library and curriculum materials in our public schools, and Oregon is no exception.

Many of these attempts are blatant in their opposition to texts featuring LGBTQ+, BIPOC, and other historically marginalized communities. These censorship attempts intend to limit the materials available to Oregon students based solely on the constitutionally protected viewpoints of those materials. I believe SB 1583 will be vital in preventing these book bans and removal attempts.

Any material that might adversely affect students in public schools is already assessed by teachers and librarians: certified, licensed professionals who are best prepared to guide students' reading choices. SB 1583 prevents an individual or group, school administrator, or school board from making unconstitutional decisions to restrict constitutionally protected material.

Parents and guardians should absolutely be involved in their child's education. They have every right to request alternative reading or viewing assignments. SB 1583 simply reminds schools and school boards that those parents and guardians do not have the right to restrict what the children of other parents or guardians can read or view. As others have said, that would be viewpoint discrimination. They can instruct their own children to not read certain texts without interfering with other children's right to read.

We know it is important for students to see themselves reflected accurately and respectfully in their school and community. We believe it is critical to carefully select books, magazines, educational videos and experiences that reflect our student populations in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. We want to make

sure that important educational texts and materials are available to those students who need it.

Please pass SB 1583 with the proposed amendment from the Oregon Library Association.

Sincerely,

An Elementary School Media Specialist
Portland, Oregon