

Submitter: Treasa Street
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1583

From a K-5 Teacher-Librarian:

There is a lot of confusion and misinformation surrounding the purpose of and effect that this bill will have in our schools. First and foremost, that it does not change anything that is already the law. This bill makes state law what is already a federal law against discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sexual identity, etc., and also solidifies students' 1st Amendment rights to information which has been settled by the Supreme Court in three separate cases. Reading through the testimonies on SB1583's webpage, there are many objections to including books that refer to, address directly, or share information regarding various aspects of those in the LGBTQ+ community; even simply acknowledging their existence in society. As a public school Teacher-Librarian, I can state emphatically that excluding books about members of our community absolutely falls into the category of discrimination and is a violation of federal law. Every minority in our community, whether they are physically disabled, are neurodivergent, are an ethnic minority, do not share in the same socio-economic status as their peers, practice a religion that is different from their peers, or identify other than heterosexual, they are entitled to be represented and acknowledged in our schools and elsewhere in society. This includes being in the curriculum and literature used for academic purposes or for pleasure reading. Erasing LGBTQ+ characters and topics from our literature will not erase real people and their lives from existence. Claiming that schools and libraries are including books with explicit sexual content that promotes things like "pedophilia" or "anal sex" is absurd, irrational, and simply not true. Uneducated accusations should have no bearing on laws passed to protect our students' first amendment right to information. Passing SB1583 will provide stability to our education system by ensuring that one religious perspective, or random conspiracy theories, are not able to dictate what is taught in our schools. We the people are governed by the rule of law, not a religious text. In the United States of America ALL of our citizens are welcome.