

Submitter: Kathy Hoogeboom-Pot
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1583
TO: Senate Committee on Education

I am writing to urge you to support SB1583 to prohibit discrimination based on the race, religion, ability, country of origin, sexuality, or gender of the individuals featured in the content of educational and library materials in public elementary and secondary schools in Oregon. It will serve to clarify standards in selection of educational materials to help schools comply with existing prohibitions on discrimination. And this in turn will protect the rights of our students to a quality education that does not try to hide certain viewpoints, stories, opinions or ideas from them and leave them ill-equipped to participate fully in the vibrant, diverse, and complex society we hope they will graduate into.

I also believe it will help to safeguard our schools against the rise in actions by extremist groups across the U.S. seeking to censor school library and classroom content based solely on their wishes to suppress constitutionally protected groups like LGBTQ+-identifying people. We must protect the rights of all parents, guardians, students for their classrooms to have access to diverse representation in materials and history taught in the school setting. This does nothing to limit a parent's or guardian's right to monitor their own children's engagement with different materials and have their own discussions about them; but no person has the right to take away access to select ideas from everyone else.

Engaging with a wide variety of ideas in educational environments is how we learn to evaluate, discuss, empathize with and understand differing viewpoints - even those we may strongly disagree with. All of us benefit from a society built on a robust shared level of education which our public schools are tasked to provide. Please vote YES on SB1583 to help our schools continue to build stronger education for all.

Thank you,
Kathy Hoogeboom-Pot