

Dear Chair Fahey, Vice-Chairs Helfrich and Kropf, and other members of the House Committee on Rules,

Please vote yes on SB 1583 A as passed by the Senate and without the - amendment proposed on 3/3. The - amendment would do more than weaken the bill; it threatens to weaken Oregon's strong anti-discrimination laws.

This bill is essential not only as a strong reminder of our anti-discrimination laws under the federal and state Constitutions and ORS 659.850 et al., among other laws. The bill is also essential to protect students, parents, school teachers, librarians, and staff; and the community from a vocal minority intent on (1) vilifying, harassing, and erasing folks based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, (2) rewriting the history of Black and brown people to distort, downplay, and even eliminate events that put white Europeans in a bad light or undermine the myth of their superiority; (3) marginalizing women and their abilities and achievements, and (4) imposing their so-called "religious" views on everyone else. To further these goals, this vocal minority has been on a campaign of censorship and book banning in our schools and communities; they all use similar phrases like "parents' rights" or "protection of children from sexually explicit materials" to justify their discriminatory crusade.

The result has been more than disruption of schools and libraries, the hijacking of their time and energy. They have also fomented discrimination that has resulted in harassment and injury of students, children. Without the strong statement of SB 1583 A, it is not an over reaction to say we will see students killed or pushed to suicide. It's already happened elsewhere.

SB 1583 A will also help preserve a curricula that should be rich with a diversity of literature and different perspectives on history and government affairs that will assure our students are well-educated and develop critical thinking skills and empathy. We want our students to reach their full potential and be as successful as possible in the world to come, not automatons who react mob-like to instilled prejudices.

This bill is also a strong recognition of the rights of all parents and guardians as well as their responsibilities to their student children. A handful of people do not as parents have the right to restrict the rights and responsibilities of all other parents and guardians in determining with schools what their children can or should read or watch. SB 1583 A simply protects the rights of all by not allowing a vocal minority to run over everyone else and violate the Constitutions and laws by trying to impose their discriminatory beliefs on others by dictating curricula and banning and censoring books.

Please protect our children and their future and reaffirm discrimination is illegal by voting yes on SB 1583 A.

Laura Allen, Seaside