

TO: Senate Committee on Education

RE: SB 1583-A

Testimony submitted by: Barb Johnson, Powell Butte, Oregon 97753

Honorable Committee Members:

Book Bans Hurt our Youth

Under the guise of "Parents Rights" books are being banned across the county ostensibly because our library boards and school administrators are failing to keep adult themes or content out of the hands of young readers. What is painfully transparent from reading opposition testimony is that is not about the loss of "parents' rights", but rather about obtaining power to restrict reading materials from being accessible to other young readers and in my opinion, parents do a great disservice to their children when we take away their freedom to explore literature. It is vitally important that schools provide a spectrum of literature that is not arbitrarily sequestered away from view. Why limit intellectual freedom and opportunity at any age?

If a child wants to read a book it is not our job as parents to say No. It is our job as parents to ask "Why this book?" and then answer or explain anything they ask about. If the content of a book is too adult or has subject matter they do not understand, they will likely lose interest and move on to another book. But to usurp their freedom to explore the literary world through the words of great authors is just plain wrong. If you do not want your child to read certain books that's "your parental right." Those rights end where my child is concerned.

I support SB 1583 and encourage the members of the Committee to support and pass this important legislation.

Barb Johnson