

Submitter: Randy Knop
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: SB1583

Madam Chair Fahey and Committee,

I speak in support of SB 1583.

As a parent of school-age students, frequent library user, and supporter of accessible literature, I know that schools and libraries are our first line of defense to providing a quality education for our youth to our most senior members.

Everyone depends on these resources to access information that provides the fundamental knowledge to find answers. When these resources are eliminated or their contents censored...We risk allowing prejudice and significant bias to take hold instead of educated and informed decision-makers.

I am alarmed at the number of organizations and individuals who are pressuring school boards, library boards and educators to ban and censure books. My recent evaluation of the American Library Association's reports on book bans and censorship are alarming. The ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom documented 1,269 demands to censor library books and resources in 2022, the highest number of attempted book bans since ALA began compiling data about censorship in libraries more than 20 years ago. The unparalleled number of reported book challenges in 2022 nearly doubles the 729 book challenges reported in 2021. Censors targeted a record 2,571 unique titles in 2022, a 38% increase from the 1,858 unique titles targeted for censorship in 2021. Of those titles, the vast majority were written by or about members of the LGBTQIA+ community or by and about Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color. And these numbers have only escalated.

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/by-the-numbers>