



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor



**State Library  
of Oregon**

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February 28, 2025

Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, and Members of the Committee:

The State Library of Oregon supports libraries of all kinds across the state, including school libraries. As part of these efforts, staff provide consulting and information to libraries facing materials challenges. We maintain the [Oregon Intellectual Freedom Clearinghouse \(OIFC\)](#), which compiles information concerning intellectual freedom challenges in libraries and schools in Oregon. We submit this testimony to share information we have learned through our work that may be helpful as you consider SB 1098. The State Library has no position on SB 1098.

OIFC collects reports of objections to library materials, policies, displays, and programs, as well as reports of hate crimes, confidentiality issues, and related incidents. Those incidents are compiled in [annual reports](#). As we noted in this [press release](#) last September, public libraries, academic libraries, and schools reported challenges to more books and other materials between July 2023 and June 2024 than at any point since we began collecting data in 1987. This data is all available in the [OIFC 2024 report](#).

The initiator of a challenge may state a variety of reasons for challenging a material's inclusion in a library or school. Common objections include claims that a material is sexually explicit, contains profanity, is unsuited to its target age group, or expresses an objectionable viewpoint. Challenges occurred at 40 different libraries, schools, and colleges, in rural and urban areas. There were challenges in 20 of Oregon's 36 counties, focused in western and northeast Oregon.

A clear pattern has emerged in recent OIFC reports: incidents and challenged materials are disproportionately about, by, or center the stories of individuals who belong to an underrepresented protected class under ORS 659.850. In 2023-24, 87% of the items challenged told the stories of one or more underrepresented groups. 66% of challenged materials focused on 2SLGBTQIA+ people, while 22% centered Black, Indigenous, or people of color.

The data shared here were gathered through reports of challenges at schools and libraries, media stories, and our staff's experience working on challenge incidents. However, we have reason to believe that incidents in Oregon are underreported. Many school and library staff are not aware of the option to report such incidents. Despite the anonymity of the reporting process, staff also may decline to report for fear of political blowback, job repercussions, or media attention on their organization.

We anticipate the numbers we have shared here would be significantly higher if all intellectual freedom incidents in Oregon were reported. Incidents may be particularly underreported in schools.

*The State Library of Oregon cultivates, preserves, and delivers library and information services to foster lifelong learning and community engagement.*

We have seen higher incidences of challenges in schools that are handled “quietly” by removing materials from the library with no review process. Also, due to the [extremely low number](#) of certified teacher-librarians employed in Oregon’s public schools, school libraries in the state are often staffed by dedicated classified staff who frequently lack formal training or education in library principles and practices. These staff may be unaware of best practices around materials challenges.

We hope that this information is useful for your discussion about SB 1098. More information is available in the OIFC 2024 report and earlier reports linked above. We are also happy to answer any questions the committee may have about materials challenges in Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy Cornelisen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Wendy Cornelisen

State Librarian