

Chair Frederick, Co-Chair Weber, and members of the committee,

My name is Sara Ryan. I live in Portland. I'm a bisexual author of books that feature LGBTQ+ characters, and I'm also a librarian. I'm writing to urge the committee to support SB 1098.

As an author, I want to share a few things I've heard from readers of my work: "Thank you for not being afraid to write about two girls falling in love. It helped me know a little more about myself." "Your book made me feel comfortable being me." "Your books taught me that I can be myself and still be loved."

As a librarian, I've seen over and over what a huge impact it makes when a young reader finds a book that reflects aspects of their identity and experience, especially when they've struggled to find any books that reflect who they are. I've also seen what a huge impact it makes when young readers find books that illuminate identities and experiences that they *don't* share, but that still resonate.

Both in the field of children's books, and in libraries, we often cite Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop's metaphor that we need books that are both mirrors and windows — mirrors where readers can see themselves reflected, and windows that let readers see into the worlds of others.

Dr. Bishop also reminds us that "When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part." That's one lesson we *don't* want Oregon's young people to learn. Please protect the rights of young people to access books that reflect their own lives and the lives of others in their communities.