

Submitter: Bridget Tyler
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1098

I am a parent and an author of children's literature. I'm testifying today because the future of our state, our country, and our planet rests on raising well-educated young people who are both well-informed and willing to discuss ideas, whether they agree with them or not. Parenting might be easier if our children are never presented with uncomfortable or controversial ideas. But parenting well is not about parenting easy. And hiding things that we find problematic or dangerous from our kids doesn't make them safer.

My daughter and I came up with this metaphor for censorship a few weeks ago when she started asking questions about some local parents who had objected to the School District musical *Oliver!* (which she performing in).

If you lived on the edge of a huge and beautiful canyon with steep cliffs, you could choose to protect children from falling by building a giant wall and forbidding anyone from looking over it or talking about what's on the other side. In success, you might safely raise some children to be fearful and limit themselves to things you found safe, but many would be driven to defy you and distrust you. Some might run away or climb the wall in secret and hurt themselves. Alternatively, you could hire smart people who know about wind, animals, and climbing to take your children out to the cliffs, show them all its beauty, and teach them how to navigate the cliffs safely. This would allow you to raise children who both knew how to stay safe around the cliffs and trusted their parents and other adults to help them when they needed it. Oh, and it'd give the whole town a hell of a better view.

I know which sort of child I choose to raise. Moreover, I think we owe it to all of the children of Oregon to create an environment in which they are educated and trusted so that they, in turn, can trust us.