

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Education
For SB 1098
March 2, 2025

Senator Frederick, Vice Chair Weber, and members of the committee: Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Senate Bill 1098, which is designed to prevent discrimination in the selection and retention of textbooks, instructional materials, and library books available to Oregon students.

My name is Ann Malkin. I am a lifelong Oregonian and serve both on the State Library Board and Deschutes Public Library District Board. The views I express are my own. I love my state and believe strongly in the power of literacy, books, and education in preparing the next generation of Oregonians to be informed citizens and productive contributors to a strong economy.

This bill is essential because it addresses the reality educators and librarians face today. Coordinated campaigns are under way throughout our state and the U.S., aimed at limiting access to books and instructional materials. Book challenges have occurred in more than half of Oregon's 36 counties. Analysis of the challenges clearly shows that they center on books written by or about people who belong to an underrepresented protected class, as defined by ORS 659.850. A full 87% of the challenges in Oregon fall into this category.

This bill would protect our school libraries and educational materials from bias, discrimination, and politicization. It would offer important resources through the Oregon Department of Education and establish fair requirements for the removal of library materials, textbooks, and instructional materials. In short, it would help ensure that students have access to a wide range of materials, viewpoints, and stories.

The importance of this bill can't be overemphasized. In many rural Oregon communities, children may have limited access to public library services and rely on their school library for the books they need to support their learning. Their textbooks and the books they check out from the school library are truly their window onto a wider world. Restricting their access to materials shortchanges them.

Funding for our school libraries has been slashed in recent decades and the dedicated teachers and library workers in our schools are stretched thin. This bill would provide guidance, protections, and the resources needed for them to ensure all Oregon students have the access to the materials they need for a well-rounded education.

I urge you to vote yes on Senate Bill 1098. The future of Oregon students depends on you! Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

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