

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

My name is Sarah McCabe and I reside in Wilsonville Oregon. I am a retired Administrator/Owner of a Language Immersion School, past Dental Practice Management Consultant, and mother of a daughter, who was adopted from China. I am writing to urge you to support [Senate Bill 1098](#), which will prohibit discrimination based on the race, religion, ability, country of origin, sexuality, or gender of the individuals featured in the content of educational and library materials in K-12 public schools in Oregon.

In Oregon, we have seen countless efforts to ban books that feature LGBTQIA2S+, Black people, Indigenous people and other people of color. topics or individuals and restrict access for students to understand the positive contributions of individuals of marginalized identities who have contributed to our society. This bill creates a statewide standard ensuring freedom of information both to users of that information, as well as providers of that information, for example librarians and educators. It also ensures students have access to accurate and representative information about their histories, communities and selves.

Banning books, can put constraints on the boundaries of our imagination and more importantly, our knowledge. It's important to our educators that they have the tools necessary to expand those boundaries. Providing new ways of processing information, thinking beyond the boundaries of the text, as well as offering alternative ways of "critical" thinking is an educators job.

Let me give you a simple, personal example of my experience with a beloved children's book, Charlotte's Web, a book on the chopping block for religious reasons in a town in Kansas. Apparently, some religious people believe that only humans should be able to speak and want the book banned.

I'd like to state that our elementary aged children are intelligent enough to know that animals can't talk. Yet, they do become engaged in hearing an imaginary story about talking animals, especially one that makes them think beyond themselves.

When I first heard Charlottes Web read to me, my mind was blown. My teacher took me on a wonderfully fun journey of exploration. The same journey I took my child on when she was in the third grade. While the book's overarching theme is about friendship, caring, and empathy, among the barnyard animals, my teacher took us on a scientific and social-emotional journey. Not just a literary journey. She built her curriculum integrating scientific thoughts with the Charlottes Web characters. We were asked, how do animals communicate in real life? Do they communicate with each other? Do they communicate with humans? If yes, how do they communicate with humans? These

questions led to a deeper discovery and study of the five senses in the animal world. Since children love their pets, the teacher had us observing our pets at home and in the classroom as a way to study the senses on a deeper level. Could they have learned this another way? Of course. But engaging children in a way that interests them is foundational to learning and Charlotte's Web was that bridge.

A book like Charlottes Web was hugely significant in our mixed race family. It was an easy way to discuss that we love and care for each other even though we don't look alike. That even though our skin, eyes and hair color are different, we care for each other, just like the different barnyard animals cared for each other.

So, my main point is this: removing tools such as books that build classroom curriculums is a dangerous precedent. While my primary fear is we will erase important pieces of American history, and cripple our understanding of people different than ourselves, I don't want more unnecessary work created for our teachers.

Dictating how a teacher teaches, is unfair to our highly educated professionals. Would you tell a dentist, construction worker, or an electrician which tools to use in their trade? No! Teachers deserve the same respect.

So please leave our books alone and allow educators to choose the tools that meet their needs and the curriculum objectives.

As a preschool and elementary administrator, I know how important it is for our youth to see their stories reflected in the books they read, and to know that they are not alone and there is nothing wrong with them. Books like Charlettes Web achieve exactly that.

I support this bill so that students can have access to all histories and cultures, and so that educators are not limited by political whims.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my story today. I urge you to vote YES to support and advance [Senate Bill 1098](#).

Thank you, Sarah McCabe