

Submitter: Julie McMillan  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1098

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

My name is Julie McMillan from Portland Oregon. I am writing to urge you to support SB 1098 which will prohibit discrimination and censorship of school library books, textbooks, and curriculum.

As a parent of two Portland Public School students, it is important to me that they have access to information and ideas from multiple perspectives so that they can develop curiosity and the ability to think critically about the world around them. When discriminatory beliefs about race, religion, ability, gender and/or sexuality are allowed to limit the books students can access at school, they have fewer opportunities to learn from the experience of others and to make up their own minds about complex issues. I do not want a small vocal majority determining what my kids can read, discuss, and learn about and The Freedom to Read component of SB 1098 will prevent that from happening.

In addition to being a parent, I am also a licensed teacher librarian who oversees collection development and library programming. I know from experience how valuable it is for young people to see themselves in the stories they read. Having role models who look like them or have similar experiences can be life saving. The majority of book bans over the past few years have targeted books by and about BIPOC and/or the LGBTQ community. It is not a coincidence that the voices of historically marginalized communities are the ones being silenced by today's increasing number of book challenges. In addition to the Freedom to Read, SB 1098 establishes a dedicated position at the ODE to help schools and districts navigate book challenges and develop strong library programs which foster multiple literacies. School libraries are one of the only instructional programs without representation at ODE and having library specific support would be a huge help to school administrators and library staff, especially in small and rural districts who may not have licensed teacher librarians in their buildings.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. I urge you to vote YES to support and advance SB 1098.

Sincerely,  
Julie McMillan