

SB 1098 - Ender Testimony in Support

Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, members of the Committee, my name is Althea Ender. I am from Portland. I am a Director on the David Douglas School Board however my testimony is my own opinion and not an official statement of that Board. I am here in support of SB 1098.

Increasing protections for library and course materials increases the opportunities for all students. At David Douglas School District, we already have policies in place mirroring the language in this bill for that reason. But it is not enough. When government bodies entertain race and gender-based content challenges it sends a message to students that the histories and perspectives of racialized and stereotyped groups are not valid and are open for attack.

When targeted censorship restricts access to learning about marginalized identities, it is not just those without access who suffer. Our unique and diverse students face discrimination from students of other school districts. Ignorance fuels hate. If young people throughout our state can't even learn second-hand about people with different backgrounds than their own, we have no right to expect these hate-based incidents at our schools to decrease. This bill makes clear that discrimination will not be tolerated in our textbooks and library shelves, just as it is not tolerated in our classrooms or on our football fields.

We are preparing our students to be successful in the real world - including the full spectrum of people and their identities. I urge this Committee to ensure that goal for all students in Oregon by enacting the additional safeguards of SB 1098.