

March 3, 2025

RE: SB 1098

To: Senator Frederick, Chair; Co-Chair Weber

Today you have the opportunity to receive testimony on SB 1098; after last session's similar bill was not able to be fully considered, this iteration continues the strong messaging that school libraries and similarly funded institutions deserve legislative support to do the work of ensuring equitable access to library collections that represent the breadth of human experience.

The role of a school librarian is to ensure that their collections offer every opportunity for students to explore and learn. When schools self-censor their collections (for example, choosing not to order a well-reviewed title dealing with a protected class that is written at an appropriate age level) or succumb to book challenges (removing titles from an established collection), it is the students who lose.

When a student is unable to find themselves, their friends, their family, or their community members reflected in either fictional stories or actual, true, history, the erasure is noticeable. Instead- when a librarian uses their expertise and commitment to the fields of both education and librarianship to find "each reader a book, and each books its reader" then we see the ability to develop a more complete awareness of self, of others, and the greater world around us.

Please carefully consider the bill, its coalition of supporters, and the multiple testimonies like this one against the fear and concern from parental rights groups. Let librarians fulfil their professional mission to support the reading lives and intellectual development of all of their patrons. Concerned parents can involve themselves at home, following their own set of values.

We need the children of Oregon to understand that all lives have value and that history deserves study; ensuring the Freedom to Read for everyone in the state will help achieve that goal.

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