

Submitter: Bridget Tyler
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 Bridget Tyler from Corvallis, Oregon and 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.

I am a parent and an author of the Young Adult duology *The Pioneer and the Survivor*. I'm testifying today because the future of our state, country, and planet rests on raising well-educated young people who are well informed and empathetic with highly developed critical thinking skills. Parenting might be easier if our children are never presented with complicated or unfamiliar ideas. But parenting well is not about parenting easy.

My eight-year-old is in the Corvallis School District musical *Oliver!* right now, and after the preview shows for schools, some parents (apparently surprised by the plot of *Oliver Twist*) objected to the content of the play. I explained censorship to her, which she found puzzling. We've had a lot of conversations about complicated things, and I often find a new understanding of complex topics in discussing them with her. I personally haven't found it challenging or complicated to discuss LGBTQ, people of color, slavery, colonialism, or any of the other topics that would be protected in this bill. But there are parents in this state who would. Talking about those issues with their children might offer those parents a chance to examine their own world views. The conversations might not be easy. But parenting well is not parenting easy.

My daughter is eight. Her best friend's brother is 11. He is also brown. He comes home once a week with a story about some kid at school using racial slurs. Every week. And we live in a liberal college town. I don't believe these children even understand the harm their words are doing. They don't know. They don't know the history. They don't know his point of view. And the best way to teach those kids to know better and do better? Books. Books put us in our people's shoes, let us see the

world through their eyes. It's so important for children to find books in libraries about people who are like them. It's also deeply important for children to encounter books about people who AREN'T like them. Could this lead to complicated conversations with our children? Yes. But parenting well is not parenting easy.

Senate Bill 1098 protects students' right to see themselves represented in the books, materials, and classrooms they learn from and to learn about diverse communities and people.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my story today. We urge you to vote YES to support and advance Senate Bill 1098.