

February 27, 2025

Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, and members of the committee:

My name is Holly Campbell-Polivka and I live in Tigard. I urge you to support SB1098, 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.

I applaud the work the Oregon Department of Education has done to make the state's curriculum inclusive of ALL students. This bill will support and secure ODE's work.

As a children's librarian in a public library, a member of the Oregon Battle of the Books committee and a person with a close family member who is transgender, I have seen firsthand many attempts at banning books.

I was significantly affected by one challenge, in particular. Several years ago, a group tried to prevent all the third through fifth graders participating in the popular statewide trivia competition, Oregon Battle of the Books from reading a particular title. *George* (now titled *Melissa*), by Alex Gino, features a trans fourth grader, and the author is non-binary. I nominated the book that year because I wanted trans kids, including my family member, to see themselves reflected in that competition. I also wanted to normalize trans experiences for children that age. I was so happy when the book was selected as one of 16 books to be on the list that year. A loud minority tried to prevent my family member and all the rest of the children participating in the competition from reading a sweet book with quite a unique perspective at that time. Thankfully, the book remained on the list despite the loud campaign to ban it. And thankfully, there are many more books than *Melissa* now that tell trans kids' stories.

The majority of the challenged books in Oregon and nationwide feature characters of color and/or LGBTQIA2S+ characters or have been written by authors from those historically marginalized groups. Book bans are tactics used by small groups of extremists to erase and

silence the voices, lived experiences, and histories of our most marginalized communities. If a parent doesn't want their child to read a specific book, that is up to them. But I don't want someone else deciding for my children what they can and cannot read.

This bill creates a statewide standard ensuring freedom of information both to users of that information, as well as providers of that information, like myself. It also ensures students have access to accurate and representative information about their histories, communities and selves.

SB1098 protects students' rights to see themselves represented in books, materials and classrooms, and to learn about diverse communities and people.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my story today. Please vote YES to support and advance SB1098.

Sincerely,

Holly Campbell-Polivka

Tigard, Oregon