

Submitter: Cecilia Smith  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1098

My name is Cecilia Smith from Northwest Portland. I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 1098.

As someone who was educated in Oregon, I was raised on diverse books portraying the lives of others. I read the classic "To Kill a Mockingbird" in addition to books exploring the various facets of the Civil Rights Movement - from Martin Luther King's nonviolent resistance to the Black Panthers - and the stories of Asian Americans in internment camps during World War II. I read the novels of Zora Neale Hurston, the poems of Langston Hughes, and authors from Latin America such as Isabel Allende and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, as well as female authors from all eras. I am a better person for having read such stories - I am more compassionate, community-oriented, civically-engaged, media literate, and doubly-conscious (that is, able to understand the self despite definitions imposed by oppression and marginalization).

Discriminatory efforts to ban books in Oregon and across the country are a direct attack on our ability to understand who we are - and can be - as people, and on our ability to function as an educated and informed democracy. Enacting safeguards against government censorship protects minorities who deserve to enjoy the right to speak and share their stories; it ensures our current and future generations are provided the same opportunity to understand our history that I had - and are adequately prepared to play an active role in our democracy going forward.

I urge you to vote yes and to support and advance Senate Bill 1098.