

Submitter: Jacquelin Muro
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1098

Public education serves as a cornerstone of societal development, shaping the minds of future generations. However, the question of what content is appropriate for students—particularly regarding age appropriateness, sexual material, gender ideology, and LGBTQ-related themes—has sparked intense debate. The proposed bill seeks to prohibit the removal of such materials from public schools, effectively mandating their presence regardless of community standards, parental input, or developmental considerations. My position argues against this bill, asserting that it undermines parental authority, disregards child development principles, oversteps governmental authority, and prioritizes ideological agendas over educational integrity. While acknowledging the value of diverse perspectives, I contend that forcing such content into classrooms without flexibility for local control or parental consent is both impractical and detrimental.

One of the foundational arguments against this bill is its erosion of parental rights and local governance, principles deeply embedded in the American educational system. Parents have a primary stake in their children's upbringing, including the values and information to which they are exposed. The U.S. Supreme Court has consistently upheld this principle, as seen in *Troxel v. Granville* (2000), which affirmed parents' fundamental right to direct their children's education and moral development. By prohibiting the removal of specific content—such as sexually explicit materials or discussions of gender ideology—this bill overrides parental discretion, mandating a one-size-fits-all approach that dismisses individual family values.

Public schools are not isolated institutions; they reflect the communities they serve. Local school boards, elected by residents, have historically tailored curricula to align with community standards. The bill's blanket protection of certain materials strips away this democratic process, centralizing control at a higher governmental level and alienating families who may find such content inappropriate for their children's age or context. For example, a parent in a conservative rural district and one in an urban progressive area may have vastly different views on what constitutes "age-appropriate" sexual education. Forcing uniform content disregards these differences, fostering resentment and reducing trust in public education.

A critical flaw in the bill is its failure to account for the developmental stages of children. Cognitive and emotional maturity varies widely across age groups, and educational content must align with these realities to be effective and safe.

Introducing complex or explicit topics—such as detailed sexual content or abstract gender concepts—before children are developmentally ready risks confusion, anxiety, or premature exposure to adult themes.

Implementation would also pose logistical challenges. Teachers, already burdened with crowded curricula and standardized testing pressures, would face additional constraints in navigating protected materials. If a book containing explicit sexual content or a lesson on gender ideology sparks parental backlash, educators would be powerless to adjust, risking classroom discord. Furthermore, the bill could invite endless litigation as families challenge its constitutionality or seek exemptions, draining school resources and diverting focus from teaching.

The inclusion of questionable content is often justified as promoting tolerance and inclusion. However, when it crosses into advocacy—particularly at young ages—it can blur the line between education and persuasion.

This bill has no place in Oregon Society or schools!

VOTE NO!!