

Submitter:

Elaine Hirsch

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB1098

Chair Frederick, Co-Chair Weber, and members of the committee.

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. I have a daughter who attends Portland Public Schools, and another daughter who recently graduated from PPS.

In Oregon, we have seen countless efforts to ban books that feature LGBTQIA2S+, Black people, Indigenous people and other people of color. Ignoring these topics or individuals and restricting access for students to understand the positive contributions of individuals of marginalized identities who have contributed to our society is unjust. This bill creates a statewide standard ensuring freedom of information both to users of that information, as well as providers of that information, such as librarians and educators. It also ensures students have access to accurate and representative information about their histories, communities and selves.

As a college librarian and mother of two young adults, I know how important it is for our youth to see their stories reflected in the books they read, and to know that they are not alone and there is nothing wrong with them. I support this bill so that youth can have access to all histories and cultures. Senate Bill 1098 protects student's 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 read this letter. I urge you to vote YES to support and advance Senate Bill 1098.

Thank you,

Elaine Hirsch