

Submitter: Justine Munds
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 Justine from Portland 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.

As a librarian, I know how important it is for everyone to have free, uncensored access to information. Our youth should be free to see their stories reflected in the books they read and not be left to question whether their identities are somehow wrong or inappropriate when they see stories similar to their own removed from their libraries and schools. Students should have free access to stories that are different from their own, to learn about the cultures, religions, and identities of others. I support this bill so that students can have access to all histories and cultures, and so that our educators and librarians are not limited by political whims.

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 hear my story today. We urge you to vote YES to support and advance Senate Bill 1098.

Thank you,
Justine Munds