



Representative Hoa Nguyen
Oregon House District 48

SB 1098 - FREEDOM TO READ ACT

3/3 Senate Education Committee

Thank you, Chair, vice chair and members of the committee. I am State Representative Hoa Nguyen, and I represent House District 48, which includes outer Southeast Portland and North Clackamas County.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 1098, the Freedom to Read Act. I have worked in education in Oregon for almost 20 years. As an educator, I have dedicated my career to fostering literacy, critical thinking, and a love of learning among students of all backgrounds.

I believe that every student in Oregon has the right to access diverse books and materials that reflect their experiences and expand their understanding of the world. Unfortunately, we are witnessing a rise in book bans and censorship efforts that disproportionately target literature by and about people of color, women, and LGBTQ+ individuals. These efforts do not protect students; they silence important voices, erase essential histories, and limit students' ability to think critically and engage in meaningful discussions about the society in which they live.

As an educator, I see firsthand how literature fosters empathy, curiosity, and resilience. When students find themselves represented in books, they feel seen, valued, and empowered. Likewise, when students encounter perspectives different from their own, they develop the critical thinking skills necessary to navigate an increasingly complex and diverse world. Censorship robs students of these opportunities and undermines our mission as educators.

Moreover, book bans create a chilling effect on teachers and librarians. We are trained professionals who carefully select age-appropriate materials that align with state educational standards and support student development. The vast majority of parents and guardians trust educators to make these decisions. SB 1098 will reinforce that trust by ensuring that

instructional materials and library books are chosen based on their educational value rather than political pressure.

The passage of this bill is not just about books—it is about protecting the integrity of our education system, the intellectual freedom of our students, and the principles of our democracy. The U.S. Supreme Court has affirmed that students have a constitutional right to access information in their school libraries. SB 1098 upholds this right and ensures that no student in Oregon is denied the opportunity to learn because of discriminatory censorship.

I urge you to support SB 1098 and stand with Oregon's educators, students, and families in protecting the right to read. Thank you for your time and consideration.