

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

My name is Linden How from Portland Community College 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.

I have been working in libraries for over a decade, and using them for my entire life. Books were the primary way I learned about the experiences and lives of others, something that fueled my empathy, identity, and desire to enter this profession in order to help others do the same. As a community college reference and instruction librarian, I am able to experience firsthand the myriad, positive ways that access to all kinds of informational material impacts students.

A world in which people of queer and marginalized identities cannot access material that allows them to affirm their own experiences and learn about those of others is not a world I want to live in. As a queer woman who grew up in a conservative, rural area, I can say that, were it not for the books that provided a window into queer identities and stories, I would not have understood that the things I was feeling as a child were normal, were feelings shared by countless others. The dangers of isolation in the current political climate cannot be overstated.

[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,

Linden How