

Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, my name is Kate Weber. I'm a licensed school librarian at a middle school in east Portland and an active member of the Oregon Library Association.

I am here today in support of senate bill 1098.

I've been lucky in my school library career in Oregon to have worked in both classified and licensed positions at schools, districts, and Education Service Districts – working with both urban and rural schools.

I've seen the huge range of school libraries here. A few schools have both licensed and classified support in their library. On the flip side are school libraries that are open a few hours a week and run by volunteers with no experience or training. Imagine the difference for students in these schools when learning to love reading and accessing reliable information.

When considering how important this bill is, I think back to my first school library job – at an elementary school as a classified library assistant with no licensed librarian.

I was told by a teacher not to order books in a popular series because it didn't fit our values. I had no training in intellectual freedom, the power of choice reading, or collection development, so I simply said "okay", despite student requests and the power those books have to turn boys into readers.

Because I received no training on the topic, I didn't do what I should have done – report it as a banned book. If my principal knew the policy, it was never shared.

With so few Oregon schools having licensed librarians, I believe we're actually far underreporting how many books are being removed from shelves – or not purchased in the first place - because of a fear of controversy.

With a school library support position at ODE, more administrators and classified library staff working without access to a licensed librarian - which is a huge majority of our schools - will know a process exists and have the support to navigate challenges.

I'm privileged to work in a highly diverse school. Thinking about students who look like mine in a school that has removed a book reflecting their story because it was deemed "inappropriate" is one of the many reasons I wanted to come today and share my support for the legislation. Thank you for the opportunity.