

## **In support of SB 1098**

Chair Fredricks, Co-chair Weber, and members of the committee:

My name is Cathy Camper. I'm the author of the Lowrider in Space graphic novels, I'm also a youth librarian from Portland, OR, I'm Arab American, and a member of the Oregon chapter of Authors Against Book Bans. I'm here in support of SB 1098.

Oregon youth must learn widely about their own culture, and that of others, to participate competitively in the future worldwide society their digital connections will demand. A school library needs books that support curriculum topics as well as curriculum learning goals (for example, the ability to debate pro vs con), and a range of current books for students' free reading, fulfilling literacy goals for all grades. Our state must step up and protect first amendment rights, where the federal Trump administration and Project 2025 threatens access to diverse information about religions, LGBTQ, non-white Americans, and women.

A group that bans picture books and poems, reveals not its strength, but its great weakness. It exposes a group that chooses not a library but a small, ignorant, stagnant, unpopulated room with no mirrors, doors or windows, all because they can't simply walk away from books they don't like and choose ones they do. A library provides both.

School librarians and educators need to feel safe, without fear of being harassed or doxed for doing what by law is their job, i.e. defending every student's first amendment right to read.

I urge you to pass this bill, to assure that all Oregon youth, educators and librarians have equal, unbiased access to the materials they need when developing and implementing a curriculum, as well as the assistance of the Department of Education, so that school libraries - rich, poor, urban, rural, large and small - have equal access.

I believe libraries are the teeth of democracy, because they provide citizens their guaranteed first amendment right to access a variety of

information for free. Please, support this bill and let us keep our Oregon library teeth and democracy, sharp!