

Submitter: Felicite Toney

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1098

My name is Felicite Toney and I live in Clackamas County. 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 am a graduate student pursuing a degree in Library and Information Science. In my personal experience and studies, I have learned that diverse voices are essential to library collections. Democracy is undermined when oppressive minority groups force their own preferences and judgments on communities by pressuring government entities to take books off library shelves and ideas out of public classrooms because the minority doesn't approve of its content. When books about historically-disenfranchised groups – including Black, Indigenous, and people of color and LGBTQ+ people – are banned in libraries and schools, this signals that discrimination, exclusion, and othering of youth and students with these identities is acceptable. It is incredibly important that library collections represent ALL of the people it serves.

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.