

Submitter: Brianna Sowinski
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1098

My name is Brianna Sowinski, I am a librarian at the North Plains Public Library, 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.

As a public librarian that serves a diverse and rural community, I know the importance of representation. Youth need to see themselves in the stories they read so that they feel connected to the world around them and see that they are an important piece of that world and the future. I support this bill in the hope that students in Oregon will have access to books that mirror their own experiences and provide windows into other experiences.

Senate Bill 1098 protects students' 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,
Brianna Sowinski