

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Education
For SB 1098
March 3, 2025

Dear Senator Frederick, Vice Chair Weber, and Members of the Committee: I urge you to support SB 1098 to uphold intellectual freedom and ensure that Oregon's students have access to diverse and representative educational materials.

As a board member of Deschutes Public Library, I have seen firsthand how access to a broad range of perspectives strengthens communities, supports critical thinking, and fosters lifelong learning. While I serve in this role, I want to be clear that I am speaking today as an individual, and my views are my own.

I understand that parents and guardians want a voice in their children's education, and they should have that. But that right does not extend to restricting access for others. All students deserve to see themselves in the books and materials they learn from, and they deserve the opportunity to engage with perspectives beyond their own. When access to information is restricted based on ideological objections, we diminish learning and exclude voices that belong in our shared history and conversations.

More than just exposure to different viewpoints, education should cultivate a mindset that can critically engage with different views. Our students need the ability to analyze, question, and thoughtfully consider ideas—even those they may not agree with. Shielding students from diverse perspectives does not protect them; it limits their ability to navigate a complex world with curiosity and discernment.

SB 1098 provides a measured, responsible approach that respects both parental involvement and the need for fair, consistent decision-making. At a time when challenges to books and educational materials are increasing across the country, Oregon has the opportunity to lead with fairness, transparency, and a commitment to intellectual freedom.

I urge you to pass SB 1098 and reinforce Oregon's commitment to an inclusive and well-informed future.

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