

Dear Members of the Committee,

As a 5th-grade teacher in Portland, I am deeply concerned about the rise in book bans that have disproportionately targeted books by or about marginalized groups, including people of color, women, and LGBTQ+ individuals. While public opposition to book banning is clear, we have seen these efforts grow in Oregon at an alarming rate, threatening the diversity and richness of the learning materials available to students.

Books under attack often reflect the lived experiences of historically marginalized groups, silencing essential discussions about race, gender, and sexuality. These bans erase important pieces of history and culture, limiting students' ability to engage with a wide range of perspectives and experiences. In fact, a 2022 survey found that 49% of Oregon 8th graders experience discrimination weekly, with 66% of Indigenous students reporting the same. Additionally, only 47% of LGBTQ+ students in Oregon felt welcome at school in 2022, highlighting the need for inclusive education.

While Oregon has existing laws to promote inclusive teaching, current protections do not explicitly prevent the censorship of materials based on the identities involved. SB1098 addresses this gap, ensuring that instructional materials cannot be banned or censored on the basis of content or creators' identities. By supporting this bill, we can ensure that all students are exposed to a diverse range of voices and experiences, helping to foster a more inclusive and welcoming educational environment.

I urge you to support SB1098 to protect students from the harmful effects of book bans and censorship, ensuring that they have access to the full breadth of educational materials that reflect the world they live in.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Brittany Dorris

5th Grade Teacher, Portland