

Submitter: Mary Ginnane

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1098

Chairperson Frederick and members of the Senate Education Committee: I am a retired librarian who has seen attempts to withdraw library materials throughout my career. Historically there have been cycles of interest in curtailing access to information and library materials. The 1990's comes to mind when the Oregon Citizens Alliance was actively attacking homosexuality including as represented in library books. The people who request that library materials be withdrawn can be well-meaning in wanting to protect their own children. However, attempts to challenge materials and curriculum often are prompted by the impulse to protect other families' children and/or motivated by outright disregard for democratic principles such as equality, dignity of all persons and the freedom to read about them. Senate Bill 1098 is a smart approach to tamping down censorship by calling out the discriminatory aspects of removing books/materials about persons with protected status'. With SB 1098 parents and guardians can still request to remove books, and school administrators are free to consider those requests. This bill will not prevent school boards and staff from considering age appropriateness, obscenity, and educational value in decisions. The bill provides an absolute defense for retaining school library and instructional materials if objections to the materials concern people and groups who have federal protected status. This provides clearcut guidance to school personnel and it's exciting to think about the side benefit of increasing students' access to materials that represent themselves, their families, their classmates.

I support SB 1098 and urge you to advance the bill to the full Senate.