

Submitter: Sabrina Eisele
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1098

Chair Frederick, Co-Chair Weber, and members of the committee,

My name is Sabrina Eisele from Neah-Kah-Nie School District 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+ and people of color who do not present as "White." When we, as a society, restrict access for students to understand the positive contributions of individuals of marginalized identities who have contributed to our society, we lose the vital representation of the impact they've made on our Nation. This bill creates a statewide standard ensuring freedom of information both to users of that information, as well as providers of that information, such as librarians and educators. It also ensures students have access to accurate and representative information about their histories, communities and selves. The US is founded on freedom of religion and the dream of finding oneself in a free land, so why would we ever restrict such historical content when it is our foundation?

As someone on the front lines of education, and more specifically, literature, I can assure you that the narrative of these books being inappropriate is wholly inaccurate. But rather a narrative of fear; fear of what might happen when our youth understand what our Nation and history is founded on: hate, discrimination, slavery, and restricting human rights to those deemed "unhuman" or "animals." But, just because we were like that in our past doesn't mean we haven't grown as a Nation into a more inclusive and diverse society. We must honor all facets of our Nation or we are doomed to fall back into the hateful nation we once were. Look at Germany for example, they had arguably the worst historical event happen on their watch, from their government and peoples, and instead of banning literature, they encourage their people to know what led to such heinous events to better be prepared to stop another one from occurring.

Additionally, this bill will allow students of all backgrounds to be represented in their school and literature. Right now, America is one of the most diverse nations, but we would never know it by looking at us with how stifling our book banning has become. We cannot allow these small minded people to rule the educational freedom of the entire State or Nation. Representation is already hard to express, as we are still learning how to accept new cultures and beliefs as a society, don't make it harder by

restricting what little representation we have now. LGBTQIA+ and POC aren't the only way students can be represented: cochlear implants, amputations, wheelchairs, glasses, and much more all represent disabilities that help students learn about what they aren't exposed to in their lives and makes them more accepting when they do in their adult lives. Families with multigenerational households, deceased parents/siblings, blended families, families with animals or farms, and much more represent the kinds of houses in our community; there is no more "nuclear family" representation needed, but the diversity of the families we have, like military families. Representation matters. You represent us, the people. Let us represent our students. Help us achieve this.

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.

Thank you,
Sabrina Eisele
ELA Teacher, Rockaway Beach, Oregon