

Submitter: Lydia Kiesling
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1098

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

I am a parent and writer in Portland, Oregon, and I am writing to urge you to support SB1098, which will prohibit discrimination based on race, religion, ability, country of origin, sexuality, or gender 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. This bill creates a statewide standard ensuring freedom of information for your constituents, and allows educators and librarians to do their jobs well. It ensures that students have access to accurate and representative information about their histories, communities and selves.

As a parent and writer, I am horrified by continued efforts to remove books from our libraries on the basis of race, religion, ability, or any other facet of identity. I am horrified that books dealing with painful truths about our collective history and present are under attack by those who seek to distort reality. We already hurt our children by underfunding our schools and devaluing the work of educators. Do we need to shrink their world too, by removing books from their libraries and classrooms?

SB1098 protects our students' rights to see themselves represented in the materials around them. It protects their right to learn, and it protects their teachers and librarians from disingenuous attacks on their character and professionalism. It makes our world bigger, at a time when so many seek to make it smaller.

I urge you to vote YES to support and advance SB1098.

Yours,
Lydia Kiesling