

Submitter: Jane Herb  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1098

As a life-long reader, library-supporter, book-industry professional, and a mom, I strongly oppose this bill. Teachers and librarians are professionals who purchase materials and create curriculum to support the developmental needs of the students in our schools. They must not make decisions with the fear of "discrimination" clouding their professional judgement on what is appropriate for the age and interests of their students.

I have watched for 30+ years in the publishing industry as books for young people have gotten more and more explicit and filled with foul language and blatant descriptions of sex acts in both words and pictures. Sadly, those kinds of books do seem to be targeted to the LGBTQ+ community, and it makes me sad to think that these kids are only meant to focus on their sexuality, rather than their entire being. It is both insulting and condescending, ultimately pulling kids down rather than lifting them up to their full potential. If parents want those kinds of materials for their children, they can easily be purchased or checked out from local public libraries. They have no place in our school libraries. Books and materials should encourage students to be their best selves, not appeal to their lowest instincts, as many of these books seem to do.

While recognizing the diversity of students' backgrounds and experiences is important, focusing on books that explore universal themes—such as perseverance, empathy, justice, and courage—can transcend individual differences. These themes are foundational to personal development and can resonate with students of all backgrounds. Inspirational books provide students with models for overcoming challenges and aspiring to greatness, no matter their starting point.

Books and materials need to represent diverse ideas, not just representation: While materials that represent diverse human experiences are essential, the overarching goal should be to inspire students to embrace new ideas and push boundaries. Books that highlight exceptional achievements, creative problem-solving, and the pursuit of higher ideals give students the tools to imagine what they could achieve. This broader vision of possibility is key to unlocking their potential.

Ultimately, teachers and librarians strive to curate materials that elevate students' ambitions, challenge their thinking, and empower them to dream bigger. While it's crucial to offer books that reflect the richness of human diversity, the focus on inspiration and personal growth will have the greatest long-term impact on helping students achieve their highest potential. This bill will interfere with our valuable

professional educators' ability to choose the best materials for our students. The opportunity cost of missing out on the best instructional materials in favor of books and other items that someone thinks "checks a box" is too high. Additionally, how could this ever be enforced? Including self-published books, there are upwards of 3 million books published in the US each year--how would anyone determine if a book was not purchased based on "discrimination?"

SB1098, while sounding potentially good, is fraught with flaws and potential unintended consequences, and I encourage a NO vote.