

Submitter: Lindsey Quigley-Johnson  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1098

Hello!

I am a Youth Librarian in a small town. I love my job and the community I serve, though oppressive minority groups use it to push their own agenda. A few years ago, we had Proud Boys march through our City during an unsanctioned 4th of July Parade. Racially motivated hate groups like these use rural towns to their advantage to spread their vitriol, with little pushback. That's why I am in support of measure SB 1098.

When books about historically-disenfranchised groups – including Black, Indigenous, and people of color and LGBTQ+ people – are banned in libraries and schools, this signals that discrimination, exclusion, and othering of youth and students with these identities is acceptable. During the 2024 homecoming parade in my town, the LGBTQ+ student group was targeted by other students, some of them athletes and younger students. With that being said, I believe that if children continue to see queer stories and BIPOC stories banned from the shelves, this gives a foothold to othering and hate. To quote Star Wars "Fear leads to Anger, Anger leads to Hate, Hate... leads to suffering".

Democracy is undermined when oppressive minority groups force their own preferences and judgments on communities by pressuring government entities to take books off library shelves and ideas out of public classrooms because the minority doesn't approve of its content. It also undermines our democracy when these groups pressure the government to censor the stories of people and communities who have been historically disenfranchised and marginalized.

Stories deserve to be told, and the freedom to read and explore in a safe environment is crucial to youth development. SB 1098 does not change any individual parent's or guardian's right to monitor or oversee what their own children read or view. It does protect the rights of ALL parents and guardians for their children to have access to diverse representation in materials and history in both school and public libraries. Banning books from shelves creates a barrier to access for these youth and their families, as they would have to search out these stories elsewhere. This in itself creates a barrier, especially if the purchasing of books is required. An adult's job is to parent their children and give them discernment, not to prevent other children from getting access.

Finally, kids deserve to see themselves represented in media. Books offer a deeper understanding and generally give broader context than a YouTube or TikTok video,

or a tv show or movie. What better way to explore, gain empathy and respect, and feel seen than through a story?

Thank you,  
Lindsey the Youth Librarian