

Submitter:

Beriah Empie

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB1098

As an educator in PPS I fully support this bill. I see first hand the importance of representation in art and literature, and schools, for queer and trans students, as well as students of color. This bill is a much needed protection from far-right censorship efforts to further alienate and dehumanize our students. Furthermore, for all young people hearing diverse stories, and multiple perspectives is an essential component to a robust education, and can play a pivotal role in fostering more empathetic citizens. I know for myself, as a straight, white, man the array of books I read as an English major had a hugely positive impact on me, and my education. Being able to engage with diverse perspectives, and to learn from stories very different from my own helped to create connection, challenge biases, and cultivate critical thinking skills. Those on the right like to argue that talking about, or learning about, elements of our identities like race and gender leads to further division, however personal experience and evidence points to the exact opposite being true. Stories unite us. I'm reminded of the Margaret Wheatley quote, "You can't hate someone whose story you know." Scratch just beneath the surface of all these book bans across the country, and hate is exactly what you will find. Please support this bill, and let's tell a different story. One that is rooted in love.