

Submitter: Erin Heyl
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 Erin Heyl. I am a public librarian with Deschutes Public Library and a longtime rural Oregon voter/resident 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+, Black people, Indigenous people and other people of color. topics or individuals and restrict access for students to understand the positive contributions of individuals of marginalized identities who have contributed to our society. This bill creates a statewide standard ensuring freedom of information both to users of that information, as well as providers of that information, for example librarians and educators. It also ensures students have access to accurate and representative information about their histories, communities and selves.

As a public librarian, rural reader, queer person, and advocate for teens, I see daily the importance that access to books that reflect their own experience effects our youth. Being able to see themselves and feel represented brings them pride and excitement. Kids who belong to majority represented groups also deserve the ability to read about people outside of their own experiences. They deserve to read about income diverse, gender diverse, racially diverse, and ability diverse kids. I support this bill so that the kids I work with in the public library, the kids I work with in public and private schools, and the kids I work with during outreach at shelters will continue to have access to books they connect with in all areas of their life. I support this bill so that we keep histories and cultures alive.

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,
Erin Heyl (she/her), Community Librarian, Deschutes Public Library