

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

My name is Melissa Molek from Salem 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.

I have worked in both elementary school and college libraries and I understand how vital it is for our youth to see themselves reflected in the books they read. Students need to know that they are not alone as they grow into adulthood. The reassurance that nothing is wrong with them is reinforced through characters in the books they read.

I support this bill. Students of all ages deserve access to all histories, cultures, and viewpoints. As a library worker, I should not be limited by political whims when selecting books for the library collection. Book bans of any kind are undemocratic and harmful because they deny access to different beliefs, perspectives, and backgrounds. Freedom of speech is foundational to our democracy and must be protected.

Senate Bill 1098 does not interfere with an individual parent or guardian's right to monitor or oversee what their own children read or view. It protects the rights of ALL parents and guardians for their children to have access to a diverse collection of materials in the school setting.

[Senate Bill 1098](#) protects student's right to see themselves represented in the books, materials and classrooms they learn from and to learn about diverse communities and people.

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,

Melissa Molek