

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

My name is Carole Whitmore from Portland 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.

I am a PPS retired teacher with trans grandchildren. They loved school and all their subjects when attending elementary school. Reading especially was a favorite activity for them. Going to the libraries in Portland and choosing their own books was a delightful and empowering experience for them and continues to be so today. I cannot imagine trying to explain to them or any other children now, why there are no books with characters or stories that represent all types of people/ humans of all color, gender, ethnicity and cultures. That book you want to read that someone recommended to you, "I'm sorry sweetheart , it's banned and you cannot read it." Experiencing and learning so much through reading about so many different interests and choosing your own reading material for personal reading experiences is imperative for all -especially emerging readers as they learn and grow.

Identifying with characters and situations that model all types of people help children and young adults to see many perspectives and feel included in the world when they see themselves reflected in literature that encompasses the beautiful diversity of being human. To deny growing minds access to reading about people of all walks of life is like turning the light off and having them sit in the dark alone and afraid.. afraid to ask and be curious about the connection of self to others. Please create accountability and structure for book challenges that are discriminatory. Their future - our future will suffer greatly without diversity in books and reading - and the right for parents and children to choose to read what they want. Leave the light on for my grandchildren and yours.

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.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my story today. I urge you to vote YES to support and advance [Senate Bill 1098](#).