

**TRAVIS NELSON**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
HOUSE DISTRICT 44  
NORTH/NORTHEAST PORTLAND



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**Support for Senate Bill 1098**

Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber and Members of the Senate Committee on Education,

For the record my name is Travis Nelson and I represent for House District 44, N and NE Portland. I speak today in support of SB 1098 which aims to fortify our anti-discrimination laws within our education systems here in Oregon. I believe this bill is much more than a legal formality, but a necessary step towards a more just and inclusive educational environment for all students in Oregon.

For the record we do have laws that require an inclusive selection of instructional materials and generally we prohibit discrimination in education. However, SB 1098 sets forth a clear mandate that explicitly protects Oregon students and the educational materials made available to them from discrimination based on race, national origin, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, physical or mental disability, military status, or marital or family status.

Fundamentally, we should not want our education systems to have any limitations on materials that are put forth towards learning. The 2023-2024 academic year witnessed another record number of book bans in the U.S, reflecting a disturbing trend towards censorship and the erasure of diverse histories and experiences. Such actions not only deplete our educational discourse, but also deny students the opportunity to see themselves reflected in their learning materials which is a critical component of fostering a sense of belonging and understanding in our increasingly diverse society.

This bill will also dismiss any attempt to assault the principles of freedom of expression and access to information. Such challenges disproportionately impact materials featuring race, racism, sexism and LGBTQ+ identities and undermine our collective efforts to provide a culturally responsive and inclusive education.

I also want to be clear, SB 1098 does not mandate what materials are being presented, but rather does not allow materials to be banned within the protected criteria. Parents and guardians can still request to remove books, and school administrators are free to consider those requests. It will also not prevent school boards and staff from considering age appropriateness, obscenity, and educational value in selection decisions.

This legislation is a clear statement of our values as Oregonians. It embodies our commitment to creating an educational environment where every student can learn, grow, and see themselves reflected in the stories and histories that shape our world. I am here today as a legislator and an openly LGBTQ+ Black man, in support of SB 1098 which I believe stands against discrimination, censorship, and the erasure of diverse voices and continues to affirm a more equitable Oregon.

I urge your support. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Travis Nelson'.

State Representative Travis Nelson  
House District 44, North/NE Portland