

Submitter: Kimberly Vande Voorde
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 Kimberly Vande Voorde from Tualatin 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 parent and volunteer in a Tigard-Tualatin School District elementary school, I see first-hand how school libraries are a core part of a student's educational experience. Being able to access literature about experiences that they might not otherwise see reflected outside their own lives helps to make them feel seen and heard. Learning about other cultures does nothing to take away from one's own culture and helps to grow empathy and understanding of their fellow classmates. I don't think access to books should ever be limited by politics. If a parent doesn't want their child to read a certain book, that is their right. However, that parent does not have a right to limit access to a book for ALL other students.

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,
Kimberly Vande Voorde