

Submitter: Neil Wong  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1098

I am writing today in support for SB1098, The Freedom to Read Bill. As a concerned citizen, I believe in the rights of our students to be able to find and access a variety of literature in their school libraries and within the school curriculum. Beyond that basic concern, though, I also have a professional interest as I am a school library media specialist. During my years as a public school librarian, I have been lucky enough to have never had someone attempt to challenge or remove any of the books from my libraries, but I have heard from many of my colleagues across the state who have had to face the harrowing situation of a special interest individual or group try to force their view of "appropriate" materials on our students.

I believe that SB1098 will help our embattled library professionals and paraprofessionals when faced with attempted book banning efforts. With ODE support and actual legislative protections, this will provide an invaluable resource for these individuals, especially when one considers the fact that library personnel are often working in isolation in their districts given the very small number of school library staff left across our state.

I hope that SB1098 will find favor so that all our students have equal access to professionally curated materials that reflect their differing needs and perspectives.

Thank you.