

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

My name is Beth Anne Huffine from Salem, Oregon 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, 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 librarian (including as an elementary school librarian at one time) and parent I have seen how books can open vast aspects of the world to children and also affirm their own experiences in the world. Books help us to become more empathetic in general and can help us understand and accept those who are different from ourselves. I personally have found my life and understanding of our world enhanced by reading books about experiences I will never have, be it because I am not of the race or sexual orientation of the writer or characters or because I am less adventurous than world travelers or marine biologists. While I understand that we all want to protect our children, it is important to have established protocols in place for reviewing school library materials. I have dealt with people who opposed materials being in a library simply because they disagreed with the viewpoint (and not because they contained any type of offensive sexual material or the like). I support this bill so that students in Oregon can have access to all histories and cultures, and so that librarians who work in positions like I was once in do not have to face challenges to materials on their own.

[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. I urge you to vote YES to support and advance [Senate Bill 1098](#).

Thank you,

Beth Anne Huffine