

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

My name is Bryan Fowler and I am from Portland, and I am writing to urge you to support SB1098, 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, Indigenous, and other communities of color representative topics, and restrict access for students to understand the positive contributions of movements and individuals of marginalized identities who have contributed to our society.

Never in the history of the world have those who banned books been good guys. All children deserve to see themselves represented in positive, affirming ways. Not representing children in literature reinforces the message that LGBTQ aren't wanted in this world. This is a group that is at greater risk for suicide. There is nothing to be gained from banning these books. It's just a way to make cowards and narrow-minded people feel more comfortable with their selfish, hateful views. I hope Oregon leaders are sophisticated enough to recognize that there is only harm done by book bans.

I urge you to support SB1098, thank you!