

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

My name is Sasha Strong from Portland 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.

SB 1098 is an easy thing to vote for. 'Let children read books.' Furthermore, 'Let's not make the State of Oregon a place where people get censored out of books.' As a queer, trans, non-binary autistic person (and a white, English-as-a-first-language, middle class person with high educational attainment), I value school libraries that have diverse representation. We don't need to erase diversity from the State of Oregon. Just as we don't need to force anyone to read certain books, we should let people read the variety of books that they choose, in alignment with parent's judgement and values about what books their children should be reading. SB 1098 protects freedom of speech and freedom to read, while also protecting parents' rights, guardians' rights, and educators' rights. We all deserve access to different ideas, and it makes sense to protect that access by prohibiting discriminatory bans. Book bans in the name of 'freedom' are actually about the opposite of freedom— they are about the tyranny of wanting everyone to think like oneself and be like oneself. Let's stand for protecting the free exchange of ideas, rather than narrowing our communities, our minds, and our world. This bill protects individual freedoms. I'm all for it.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my story today. I urge you to vote YES to support and advance [Senate Bill 1098](#).