

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

My name is Chris Thurston 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.

It is disturbingly fascist that our government is trying to erase whole communities of people on the basis of their gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, ableism, and so forth. Please VOTE YES on the FREEDOM TO READ BILL!!!

Children DESERVE to see themselves reflected in the literature they read so as to feel empowered, inspired, included, respected, and loved by society and the world at large! It is crucial that we tell the TRUTH about history, that we share the uniqueness that each of us brings to the world, and that we expand our awareness of other cultures and struggles.

I urge you to support SB1098, thank you!