

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

My name is Erin Dieterich from Portland Oregon 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. 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 parent of elementary and preschool aged children, I see how important it is for all children to have exposure to a wide variety of stories and experiences in the books they read. It makes them grow up with deeper understanding and awareness, helps develop a sense of self and deepens their empathy towards others and their own unique experiences. I want my children, and all children, to have access to learn about histories and cultures because that will help them understand the complex world we live in.

I have full trust in the educators who lead our classrooms and libraries to select books that are appropriate for my children and do not believe any good comes from book bans or censorship. Book bans are censorship strategies used by small groups of extremists to erase other's experiences and voices. Our first amendment rights allow us to hear all sides of a given argument and make our own decisions - without interference from government. Now more than ever, it is critical we uphold this tenant of our Democracy.

SB1098 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 testimony today. We urge you to vote YES to support and advance SB1098.

Thank you, Erin Dieterich