

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

My name is Katie Glover. I am a mother and a teacher from Oregon City 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.

In my classroom, I believe books inspire kids, allow them to ask questions about their world/community, understand unique qualities in all people (especially those most marginalized), and most of all connect to a story or character. I believe in the importance of reading books where all of my students can have the opportunity to connect to a character through their actions, personalities, and/or how they look. These connections help my students feel like they are a part of the world and not excluded. I can't imagine not having the opportunity to read a book where my students can see themselves and one another. It is also equally important for my students to see people of all walks of life in the stories we read in order for them to build a broader understanding of the world around them. Books in many ways are how my students access the world outside of their community. I cannot imagine not being able to read books in my classroom because of their diverse representation. I cannot imagine not being able to read books with neurodivergent kids who tackle challenges and find wins in the world, books that share the wonderful truth about all the different types of 'families' in our community, how a black astronaut believed in herself in order to reach her dream, or how a young boy loved dressing up in dresses and mermaid outfits because it made him feel comfortable. These are the stories that promote curiosity, questions, and wonder about all the beautiful uniqueness found in our world. Why would we choose to not allow kids to have this opportunity and limit their view?

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 story today. I urge you to vote YES to support and advance SB1098.

Katie Glover