

## **Testimony in Support of SB 1098**

**Submitted by: Teri Jones, State Vice President, Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA); School Library Manager**

**April 14, 2025**

Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Teri Jones, and I serve as the State Vice President of the Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA), representing more than 25,000 classified school employees across our state. I am also proud to serve my community as an Elementary School Library Manager—a role I hold not just as a profession, but as a calling.

I am here today to express my strong support for SB 1098, which prohibits discrimination in the selection or retention of school library resources, textbooks, instructional materials, and during the development and implementation of curriculum. This bill is both timely and necessary.

As a library manager, as a parent of a trans daughter, and in my own experience growing up in the 1960's with an unmarried mother, I have witnessed firsthand the essential role that inclusive and representative materials play in the educational journey of our students. Holding a book in your hand that authentically portrays your life and reality, is company, comfort, and acceptance. I wish my daughter had those stories when she was in elementary school. And to the best of my budget my students do have those stories

Unfortunately, across the country and increasingly here in Oregon, we are seeing efforts to censor, restrict, or ban materials that represent marginalized communities—particularly LGBTQ+ individuals, communities of color, and historically underrepresented voices. These efforts are not only harmful to students but also to the educators and school staff who are dedicated to providing well-rounded, accurate, and inclusive education.

As a union representing classified educators—library staff, instructional assistants, technology support professionals, and more—OSEA believes that every school employee should be empowered to support a curriculum that honors diversity, promotes equity, and reflects the full breadth of student experiences. Discrimination in material selection undermines this goal and, worse, sends a message to students that their stories, histories, or identities are unwelcome or inappropriate.

SB 1098 protects against that. It affirms that decisions about what our students learn should be grounded in educational merit and inclusive values—not prejudice. It gives educators, including classified staff like library managers, the reassurance that they can do their jobs ethically and professionally without fear of retaliation for simply including diverse materials.

A library is a gateway to understanding, identifying, wonderment, and critical thinking. It is a place where every student should be able to see themselves reflected and to learn about

the diverse world around them. In my capacity as both a library manager and a union leader, I urge this committee to pass SB 1098. Our students deserve nothing less than access to a complete and equitable education—and that begins with protecting the integrity of our libraries, classrooms, and curriculum.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to Oregon's students and educators.

Sincerely,

Teri Jones

State Vice President, Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA)

School Library Manager