



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

My name is Amanda Orozco, and I serve as the Policy Coordinator at Unite Oregon. Our organization advocates alongside immigrants, refugees, people of color, people experiencing poverty, and rural Oregonians. I am writing in strong support of SB 1098, which establishes a statewide standard to ensure that all students have access to diverse and representative materials in Oregon's public schools.

Across the country, we are seeing efforts to ban books that center LGBTQIA2S+ individuals, Black and Indigenous communities, and other historically marginalized groups. These bans are not isolated incidents. They are part of a larger campaign to erase the voices and stories of communities that have long been excluded from mainstream narratives. SB 1098 ensures that materials cannot be removed because of who is represented in them.

As a queer Latina who grew up in predominantly white, conservative communities, I know firsthand how affirming and necessary it is for students to see their identities reflected in the books they read. Representation in education is essential for student engagement, belonging, and academic success. Inclusive materials help students feel seen, and they also foster empathy and understanding among their peers.

This bill does not limit a parent's ability to make decisions for their own child. It ensures that all students and families have the freedom to access a wide range of perspectives and stories. It also supports educators and librarians, who are too often left without guidance when facing politically motivated book challenges. The addition of a librarian support specialist at the Oregon Department of Education is a meaningful step to protect intellectual freedom in our schools.

Unite Oregon urges your support for SB 1098 to protect the right to learn and to affirm the dignity of all Oregon students.

Sincerely,
Amanda Orozco
Policy Coordinator