

Submitter: Cat Winters
On Behalf Of: Authors Against Book Bans
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1098

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

My name is Cat Winters, I'm from Hillsboro, and I represent Authors Against Book Bans. I support Senate Bill 1098.

We all want to protect and enrich our children. In addition to being an author, I'm the parent of two daughters who graduated from Oregon public schools, one of whom is now attending an Oregon public university.

I know the vital importance of allowing children and teens to see themselves represented in books. I know how crucial it is for young people to have access to a diverse selection of reading materials to develop a deeper understanding of the world around them and to better understand themselves.

We authors often write the books we needed as kids but couldn't find, and in turn we help kids who feel different, confused, and ostracized to see they're not alone. Our inboxes are filled with letters from students who tell us that our work made them feel less alone and less afraid to face the challenges and pain in their lives.

According to the Oregon Intellectual Freedom Clearinghouse 2024 Report, 66% of challenged items in Oregon were by or about LGBTQ+ people or centered LGBTQ+ people.

Human experience is complex and diverse. Hiding books by and about marginalized groups of people not only sends the message that it's okay to shun people who aren't like ourselves, but it also robs young people of the chance to learn compassion and overcome prejudice. It deprives them of their ability to receive a thorough, enriching education that will prepare them for life.

Teachers and librarians are experts in their fields. They have been highly trained and certified to select age-appropriate, relevant, and engaging materials for students. We can and should trust them.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB 1098.

Thank you.

Cat Winters

Author, parent, & co-leader of the Oregon chapter of Authors Against Book Bans