

Levi Rezanka
House Committee on Education
RE: Support for SB 1098
4/23/25

Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and members of the committee,

My name is Levi Rezanka from Salem, Oregon and I am a current third year attending Willamette University. I am writing to urge you to support SB 1098, 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 people, Indigenous people and other people of color and restrict access for students to understand the positive contributions of 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 young trans and queer person, I have had first-hand experience in how literature relating to LGBTQIA2S+ has directly impacted queer youth. During high school in my hometown in Seattle, we had a book club that would take place once a week that prioritized centering the voices of marginalized communities such as the queer community and various racial and ethnic groups. Having direct access to these books helped guide me through my own transition and understanding into how race, gender, and sexuality can intersect. If I hadn't had access to these materials, I would have been infinitely more confused upon encountering the adult world during my introduction to college. Books help expose young people to concepts they may not be familiar with and can help encourage foundational social skills such as empathy and cultural awareness.

It is thanks to the access of these books that I was able to realize that my own experience with my gender identity and sexuality was not just something I had gone through. I support this bill because showing young queer kids that they are not alone and there is nothing wrong with being queer or diverse is a requirement, not just an option. SB 1098 does not change any individual parent's or guardian's right to monitor or oversee what their own children read or view. It does protect the rights of ALL parents and guardians for their children to have access to diverse representation in materials and history taught in the school setting.

SB 1098 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. We urge you to vote YES to support

and advance SB 1098.

Thank you,
Levi Rezanka