

Laila McComb

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 Laila McComb, I am a student currently 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 queer, woman of color, who has worked as a library TA in high school; I know now, more than ever, how important it is for youth to see stories that accurately represent their identities and struggles. Ignoring an issue doesn't make it go away, it only causes further harm to those it is affecting. I support this bill because literature and education are a right for every American, and erasing history won't prevent the harm done to individuals, nor create conversation to work towards a more accepting and kinder world.

I hail from Nebraska, a state that has consistently voted Red for the last 61 years. Book bans heavily affect the quality of education in my state. I went to a public high school in my state with a student body population of around 2,400 students, and our ACT scores average to a 14. Nebraska currently has over 127 challenges to book bans currently, which disproportionately affects queer students, students of color, and students dealing with mental health.

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,
Laila McComb