

Alex van Nieuwenhuysen  
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 Alex van Nieuwenhuysen, and I am a student at 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.

Growing up, I was not exposed to books that highlighted queerness, but I wish I were, as I would have learned earlier that love comes in many forms and all of it is natural. Children's books like *And Tango Makes Three* and *When Aidan Became a Brother* help teach children that it is okay to be different, as well as teaching empathy towards others.

Queer books for teenagers are also important as many people question their sexuality and gender when they are in high school, just as I did. Having access to queer books in their libraries help teens understand their own feelings towards their identity in safe ways. Having queer books also helps people feel represented as schools rarely teach about the LGBTQ+ community and young queer people can feel alone and isolated at school due to the lack of representation. Having access to these books can improve students' acceptance of themselves and others, as well as improve self-esteem. For all these reasons, this is why I support this bill.

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,  
Alex van Nieuwenhuysen