

Submitter: Erica Chaney

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1098

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

My name is Erica Chaney from Corvallis and 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, topics or individuals 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 our communal history as well as reflections of them selves in that community history.

As a white cis-woman I have had the privilege of seeing aspects of my experiences reflected in literature for years, not as much as the white cis-males but still a drastically different experience than my peers with different backgrounds. I am so incredibly hearted to see the wide variety of books by and about experiences outside of that one narrow band of experience. I am glad that my children can read and learn about many many life experiences and ways of being.

Simply opening a window to the opportunity to find different ways of being does not constitute grooming or shaming people. Our American history is full of triumph and tragedy and suppressing parts of that history because it hurts is simply burying our head in the sand, and will ensure that the past mistakes will be repeated. This is why a full and complete representation of history is important. Acknowledging past wrongs will pave the way for learning and continuing to improve ourselves and our society.

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. I urge you to vote

YES to support and advance SB 1098.

Thank you,  
Erica Chaney