

IN FAVOR OF SENATE BILL 1098

My name is Jess Twede, and I am a high school librarian in the Tigard-Tualatin School District. I am writing to urge you to support Senate Bill 1098, which will prohibit discrimination based on race, religion, ability, country of origin, sexuality, or gender 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+ individuals, Black people, Indigenous people, and other communities of color. These efforts restrict students' access to literature that highlights the positive contributions of marginalized individuals to our society. Senate Bill 1098 creates a statewide standard that upholds freedom of information for both students and the educators and librarians who serve them. It ensures that all students have access to accurate and representative information about their histories, communities, and identities.

Student voices are often the best indicators of whose identities are missing from our library collections. When students cannot find books that reflect their experiences, they may feel ignored or insignificant. As a high school librarian, I witness students every day as they explore and shape their identities, often independently of their families' perspectives. These students deserve access to well-curated literature that meets professional selection criteria—ensuring materials are factual, accurate, and recommended by experts. This bill does not prevent parents from guiding their own children's reading choices, but it does protect all students' First Amendment right to access information free from censorship. Without safeguards like Senate Bill 1098, vocal extremist groups can erase and silence the voices, experiences, and histories of our most marginalized communities.

All students benefit when they have access to diverse literature. Exposure to a wide range of perspectives fosters empathy, open-mindedness, and confidence in interacting with people from different backgrounds. Censoring marginalized voices teaches students that discrimination, exclusion, and erasure are acceptable. While parents have the right to make decisions for their own children, allowing extremist groups to dictate what is available to all students is unacceptable, irresponsible, and unconstitutional.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my perspective. I urge you to vote **YES** to support and advance Senate Bill 1098.

Sincerely, Jess Twede