

Submitter:

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On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB1098

Some of my earliest memories took place between the walls of my local library. As I grew, and learned to read on my own, I became fascinated by the wide array of ideas, viewpoints, and stories available on the shelves of the Deschutes Public Library. Every week, I looked forward to picking up a grocery bag, or three, full of books and reading them with my mother. One day, my world was shaken after my school librarian banned a favorite book of mine because she believed that the positive representation of transgender people was too inappropriate for 9,10, and 11 year old students to witness. Though my experience with book censorship is mild compared to others', oppressive book bans are far too common in our country. In the 2023-2024 alone, PEN America recorded 4,231 bans on individual books. Of these, 44% include prominent characters of color, and 39% include LGBT characters. Book bans have historically been used by extremists to oppress people who they deem unworthy of being seen and heard. Now more than ever, it is imperative that libraries continue to stand as beacons of diversity and free speech.