

Submitter: April Witteveen
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1583

As a library worker in Oregon who has been through challenges to intellectual freedom in a public library setting, and saw the mirrored effect at the local public school system, I wholeheartedly support SB 1583.

Public education must provide the full breadth of lived experiences and histories relevant to a selected curriculum; to avoid this responsibility is to not only alienate our community members who exist in protected classes but also prevents all students from learning what they need to move forward with the historical context necessary to be engaged, aware citizens.

Discomfort is not a reason to avoid learning about Black history and the Black Lives Matter movement; the cry of "indoctrination" indicates a lack of knowledge about gender identity and the scientific nature of sexual attraction. The state of Oregon has a difficult, colonial past connected to Westward expansion, and to avoid discussion of primarily white settler impact on Indigenous people is to continue a narrative of white supremacy. The experiences of our Latinx communities, both historical and current, are crucial to supporting the growing diversity of not just Oregon, but the entire country. Anti-Asian sentiment, finding a new peak around the COVID-19 pandemic, indicates an ongoing racism that deserves full consideration given Oregon's participation in Japanese internment camps.

Our students deserve access to materials that represent themselves, their families, and their lived experiences. Our students deserve to read about people and experiences that are different from their own. If you aren't familiar with the idea of books and information serving as windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors, I recommend taking a look at the work of Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop.

Please vote yes on SB 1583 to allow our students access to the full breadth of information that will support them in becoming citizens who can continue making Oregon a great, and even better, place to live.