

Submitter: Liz O'Donnell  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure: SB1583

To whom it may concern,

I am in support of this bill and I encourage you to do the same. Many parents and caregivers want to keep their children safe from harmful media, however book banning has been used to perpetuate prejudice and harmful stereotypes about groups of people on the basis that simply talking about real people and their stories is by default inappropriate for children. While age appropriateness is imperative, teachers and librarians are already trained and equipped to assess this as part of their job in teaching of all subjects. This bill would not infringe upon the rights of a parent to question literature based on relevancy or specific content, and the previously established procedures could still be used when a questionable material is presented. Nor does this bill infringe upon the rights of a parent to make decisions regarding their own children.

There IS a way to discuss and present our history and the real lives of Native Americans, those with disabilities, refugees, and LGBTQ (to list a few) in an age appropriate way in schools and libraries. This bill would allow for that way to be found by teachers, without the fear that an important, educational, or edifying text might be banned just for its general subject or the characteristics of its author or protagonist. Our school children are diverse, and their needs are diverse. Continuing to allow the beliefs of a few dictate what is right for all children in the form of book bans is irresponsible and doesn't meet the needs of our diverse children. Please support this bill in order to allow those individuals of a protected class to tell their story and be evaluated based on quality and message, rather than prejudice.