

In support of Senate Bill 1583

Dear Decision makers,

As a female scientist deeply invested in intellectual empowerment of learners of all backgrounds, I am reaching out to express my **strong support for Senate Bill 1583**, introduced by Senator Frederick. This pivotal legislation seeks to eliminate discrimination in the selection of educational resources, including textbooks, instructional materials, program materials, and library books in our public schools.

My journey in science (I have a Ph.D. in Chemistry, over 20 scientific publications in major journals and a very rewarding career in the field of Science Information & Informatics) has taught me the value of diverse perspectives and the critical importance of inclusive learning environments.

Throughout my career, I have witnessed the challenges faced by educators, at my time it was the idea that “women should not be in science or have any career”. Those challenges were thankfully overcome over time, thanks to many who supported bordering viewpoints, equality and supported the foundational values of education and freedom of thought.

These principles are not merely academic ideals; they are essential components of a robust educational system that prepares students to thrive in a multifaceted and interconnected world. Senate Bill 1583 represents a crucial step forward in ensuring that our educational content reflects the rich diversity of human experience and knowledge.

SB 1583 is a beacon of hope for those of us who believe in empowering students through access to a wide range of ideas and narratives, who would want to limit opportunities which originate in past viewpoints and limited access? It is imperative that our educational resources accurately represent the diversity of our student population, fostering an environment where every student can see themselves and their potential reflected in their studies

The current climate of increased attempts to censor educational materials, with a disconcerting focus on LGBTQ+ content, poses a significant threat to the principles of academic freedom and the right to knowledge. By supporting SB 1583, we assert our commitment to protecting these principles and ensuring that our students benefit from an education that is both comprehensive and inclusive.

I urge you to lend your support to Senate Bill 1583 as it comes up for a vote. The proposed amendment from the Oregon Library Association strengthens the bill further, ensuring it effectively addresses the current challenges within our educational framework. Your vote in favor of SB 1583 will affirm the rights of educators, librarians, and students to access diverse and inclusive educational materials, paving the way for a more enlightened and equitable society.

Thank you for considering this critical issue. Your support for SB 1583 will send a resounding message that Oregon stands for education that embraces diversity, champions intellectual freedom, and rejects censorship.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Ernst, Ph.D., Langlois, OR