

Submitter: Amy Forrester  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure: SB1583

TO: Senate Committee on Education

FROM: Amy Seto Forrester

RE: Support for SB1583

Date: 2/12/2024

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber & and Members of the Senate Committee on Education,

My name is Amy Seto Forrester and I am writing to urge you to support SB1583, which will prohibit discrimination based on the race, religion, ability, country of origin, sexuality, or gender of the individuals featured in the content of educational and library materials in public elementary and secondary schools in Oregon. In Oregon, we have seen countless efforts to ban books that feature LGBTQIA2S+ topics or individuals and restrict access for students to understand the positive contributions of individuals of marginalized identities who have contributed to our society. This bill creates a statewide standard ensuring freedom of information both to users of that information, as well as providers of that information, for example librarians and educators. It also ensures people have access to accurate and representative information about their histories, communities and selves, and creates more room for understanding over prejudice in Oregon.

As a children's librarian and children's book author who identifies as mixed race Chinese American, I know how important it is for the youth of Oregon to see themselves reflected in the books they read. I have experienced the sheer joy of a child when they exclaim, "That character looks like me!" I have seen the light go on in the eyes of a child when I introduce them to a book that sparks their imagination, that speaks to their experiences, that opens up opportunities for future exploration.

BIPOC, LGTQBIA+, and other marginalized youth are Oregon's youth. They deserve to see their histories, their contributions, their struggles, their triumphs, their futures in their classrooms and on the shelves at their school and public libraries. I know what it feels like to see yourself or your community erased from the story, othered, or pushed to the side. I know what it feels like to constantly worry about family members as anti-Asian hate crimes have increased in this county. I firmly believe that creating a better, more empathetic world starts with the stories and information we share with our youth.

SB1583 does not change any individual parent's or guardian's right to monitor or oversee what their own children read or view. It does protect the rights of ALL

parents and guardians for their children to have access to diverse representation in materials and history taught in the school setting.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my story today. We hope you will vote YES to support and advance SB1583.

Thank you,  
Amy Seto Forrester