

12 February 2024

As an experienced library professional and concerned citizen, I strongly urge you to support SB 1583 and the proposed amendment from the Oregon Library Association. SB 1583 will prevent discrimination when selecting textbooks, instructional materials, program materials, or library books in public schools. This bill brings clarity to help schools and school boards comply with the prohibition on discrimination required by ORS 659.850.

As you know, Oregon is not immune from the onslaught of attempts to censor library and curriculum materials in our public schools, many of which are targeted at LGBTQ+ - related content. This censorship attempts to limit the materials available to Oregon students based solely on constitutionally protected viewpoints expressed in those materials. If passed, I believe that SB 1583 will help prevent these book bans and removal attempts.

As a library director, I know that students need to see themselves reflected in their community. Librarians and other educators play a crucial role in supporting students by carefully selecting books, magazines, educational videos, and other materials for teaching and self-directed learning that reflect their cultural and linguistic diversity. In my own work, I've seen firsthand on numerous occasions how deeply meaningful it is to connect students to historical documents that shine a light on their own lived experiences as BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+ youth through those who have come before them and whose history was heretofore unknown to them and invisible to most. I want to be sure that every student has access to important educational texts and materials that they need to expand their knowledge, affirm their personhood, cultivate lifelong learning, and exercise their rights as citizens to support a healthy democracy.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for your action on behalf of Oregon's students and educators.

Sincerely,

Shawna Gandy  
Portland, OR