

Submitter: Perry Stokes  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure: SB1583

Why is this bill necessary since discrimination in education already prohibited by ORS 659.850?

The answer is clear by much of the testimony submitted in opposition to the bill. Many are outright calling for --or claiming the right to-- exclude from school curriculum the roles and contributions of individuals and groups against whom discrimination is prohibited under state law.

This is not surprising. Whenever there has been progress made towards equity and justice in America, resistance and backlash has ensued. What we're seeing now fits within the historical trend of reactionary movements to civil liberty advancements, such as Jim Crow laws, Tulsa Race Massacre, anti-suffragist groups, Southern segregationists, and opponents of same-sex marriage. In the west, Oregon has had the infamous distinction of being founded as a Black exclusion state and a haven for the Klan for decades. SB1583 will help remedy that injustice.

SB1583 simply emphasizes existing law prohibiting discrimination. It would not be necessary if not for the current surge of coordinated coercion by special interest groups to suppress the emergence of more fair and accurate representations of historical events, and seeking to deny access to diverse literature for all students, despite already having less-restrictive opt-out options to apply only to their own kids. These efforts are not only unethical and discriminatory, they are likely unconstitutional and damaging to student success in all fields.

According to a 2022 study published in Nature Human Behavior journal, "Failing to incorporate principles of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) into research has led to study retraction, and the consequences of such failure can be devastating for marginalized communities — including persistent health disparities, mistrust and disengagement with academia, and death." (Ruzycki, S.M., Ahmed, S.B. Equity, diversity and inclusion are foundational research skills. Nat Hum Behav 6, 910–912 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-022-01406-7>)

In the context of the backlash, the state has a compelling interest to reinforce the requirement of nondiscrimination in education by passing SB1583. It demonstrates support of constitutional principles by preventing viewpoint discrimination many schools are being pressured to exert.

The progress made toward increasing awareness of bias and mitigating it through

public education may lead not only to “a more perfect union” in the long run, but in the short term will help decrease the heightened risk of bullying and suffering of our fellow Americans that have been silenced and disenfranchised for too long.

Thank you for voting YES on SB1583.