

To: Senate Committee on Education
From: Donna Cohen, MLIS, MEd, Civics for Adults
Date: Feb 13, 2024
Re: Support for SB 1583 amended to include "religious affiliation".

Chair Dembrow and Committee on Education

I write to you as a former teacher and librarian and, currently, a presenter of civics workshops for adults at libraries and other venues throughout the United States.

SB 1583 seeks to enshrine what should already be an approach to the selection of education materials, but is not. We are living through a time in which curiosity, intellect, analysis and nuance is stifled. It is a time in which progress and inclusion are resisted. The banning of books is a reflection of these attitudes.

Our society is going through demographic and social changes, which, for some, are wrenching and frightening. Some individuals and institutions are fighting against these changes and believe that by forcing others to join their efforts to resist them, they will hold back the future. They will not succeed.

The only question is whether Oregon assists those who want to shut out the full reflection of our world in our schools or whether we show respect for all Oregonians. Book bans do the former; stopping book bans supports the latter. Stopping book bans says ALL Americans belong.

Please support SB 1583, with an amendment to include "religious affiliation".