

Submitter: Laura Erceg
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1583

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

My name is Laura Erceg 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.

As a Director of a small, rural, grassroots Pride organization, I value the work of our State Legislature toward ensuring practices and expectations of inclusivity. While Oregon remains a relatively safe place legislatively for our 2SLGBTQIA+ community, rural Oregon communities are more socially conservative and aligned with the national narratives which view the community's adults as "dangerous" and our youth as mis-guided.

In Curry County, our community members and leaders have been embroiled in a book banning campaign against the public library for well over a year. The dialogue from those seeking to remove books from the shelves is nothing short of censure. Youth and adults arrive at each library board meeting to remind their community that their queer bodies and lives matter and deserve to be read about. The book banners are not winning, but they were able to elect one person to the library board who has created barriers to the library completing their work and service to the community by continuing this debate.

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, Laura Erceg