

Submitter: Amanda Ferrat
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1583

I support SB 1583. As a Queer, disabled, Pagan, fat, neurodivergent woman I recognize the importance of representation in text, media, television, etc. while growing up to help foster self esteem and a positive sense of self and belonging. As an antiracism and social justice activist, I also recognize the importance of diversity and inclusion in our education system, textbooks, and other print and media materials to foster safety and inclusion for all. It is imperative that we do the work to create positive, safe, inclusive and affirming environments for our youth in education that help foster a sense of belonging. Our youth deserve to have access to a diverse and truthful range of educational and library materials.

Efforts across the nation to remove positive references to LGBTQ+ people, BIPOC folks, those with disability, etc. and exclude information about our country's complex history regarding race, gender, ability and sexuality do the exact opposite of creating a positive, safe and affirming environment. In Oregon we must do better than that. Our youth deserve better.

When youth see themselves reflected in all their complexity and intersecting identities in the curriculum and have access to stories of people like them in books, they feel validated. Sharing our history and stories is protective from the despair and isolation that can lead young people to suicide, drugs, alcohol and other physical and mental health struggles. Diversity, equity and inclusion are suicide prevention and harm reduction measures!

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. Please protect our youth's right to access of diverse and inclusive educational materials.