

SB 1583

Testimony in Opposition

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. Thank you for your public service. I, also, am an elected official. I serve as a Board member of a school district with over 5,000 students. I see the faces of each of these children and through our Board's strategic plan we strive that "All students will receive the care, support and instruction needed to graduate from high school with plans for their most successful future". I think we would all be in agreement with that.

Our community elected each member of our Board to represent them. They trust us to make decisions in the best interest of their treasured children. We take that responsibility seriously.

Please help me understand the "State Emergency" of SB 1583.

Is it that community members and their elected School Boards are not responsible enough to understand and follow already clearly-defined anti-discrimination mandates?

Is there an overall legislative distrust of Oregon School Boards?

We already have very clear direction on anti-discrimination, on federal and state levels. This is a slap in the face that you don't think we're doing our jobs. So why do you really need this "Emergency" bill?

We have a process for adoption of curriculum, where it clearly states, "The district school board shall adopt the list in compliance with ORS 337.141 and shall involve parents and citizens in the process", which checks many anti-discrimination boxes as already required by the state. There is also a clearly-defined process for citizens who want to voice their concern over textbooks or other instructional materials.

This bill takes away the opportunity for the voice of tax-paying communities to weigh in on curriculum or challenge anything presented to our children and discourages community involvement. AND...because this is a "State

Emergency” bill, citizens would not even have a right to pursue an initiative opposing it.

Another thing that concerns me:

Enrollment is already down since Covid lockdowns. Our enrollment is not rapidly recovering. This bill takes away citizen involvement in adoption of curriculum and also removes their opportunity to use established processes so their voice can, at the very least, be heard.

I imagine, if this bill were to be enacted, School Choice would quickly become an attractive option for parents who feel they have no voice, further depleting enrollment in our public schools.

People—this is not a bill to prevent “book banning”. It is much deeper. Again, this bill would take away any say as to what would be presented to your children and then remove your voice if you don’t agree with whatever the State decides is appropriate.

In this time of deepened distrust of public education, now is not the time to validate this distrust by taking away the opportunity of citizens of individual school districts, to be heard.

Please, vote NO on SB 1583! As a School Board member, this bill makes me feel like the State is discriminating against Oregon School Boards! I implore you to support us to do the work of community-elected Boards; enable us to represent the children and parents of our distinct districts.

Thank you,

Andrea Miner

Roseburg School District Director