

February 13, 2024

Good afternoon, Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber, and committee members,

My name is Beth Clarke, and I'm here to support SB1583. I am the Library Services Specialist for the Lane Education Service District. This means I am the Librarian of Record for 12, primarily rural, school districts and 35+ school libraries in Lane County. During my very first week on the job in late November 2023, I assisted a school district with a book reconsideration. "Book reconsideration" sounds benign but it's really a book banning. The book in question was *The Hate U Give*. Several community members wanted to ban the book from the 9th grade English Language Arts curriculum.

If you're not familiar with the book, it's a spectacular book about the contemporary civil rights movement, centered around the Black Lives Matter movement. The main character is a 16 year old girl who witnesses her unarmed, childhood friend be shot and killed by a white police officer. This event forces her to consider her place in the world, her place in her community, school, who she is, and what she believes.

As much as we like to think the civil rights movement from the 50s and 60s resonates with our high school students, but it simply doesn't. Our students NEED contemporary books like this. They need books about the modern civil rights movement that challenge them and make them have deep, meaningful conversations about events in our world. They need dynamic, engaging books that make them think about what they believe and why. It IS OK for them to be uncomfortable sometimes.

Thank you for your time. I encourage you to move SB1583 to the floor as soon as possible.