



SB 1583 Is an Ideologically-Driven Attempt to Undermine the Rights and Responsibilities of Local Communities, School Boards, and Parents to Make Decisions Best for Local Schools

The Oregon Republican Party stands in strong opposition to SB 1583 and its dictatorial approach to decisions about materials allowed in classrooms and school libraries in the diverse communities of our state. Make no mistake: SB 1583 is not about discrimination against minority segments of society; rather it is about outlawing discernment—the right and responsibility of local school boards and parents to discern between quality, age-appropriate educational material, and ideologically-driven, age-inappropriate material with the potential to harm children physically, emotionally, and socially.

Current law already prohibits discrimination, including the choice of educational materials and library book selections, but that is not enough for those pushing this bill. SB 1583, which proponents publicly claim will remove political or ideological bias, would do the opposite—amplifying and codifying into state law ideology opposed by many Oregonians. SB1583 already has become a political hot potato, with activists tagging on amendments mandating what schools must teach or not teach. SB1583 would hand control to ideologically-driven interest groups, unable or unwilling to persuade parents, school boards, and communities, and seeking instead to dictate by fiat.

Already Oregon is experiencing an exodus of children from under-performing public schools. SB 1583 would only fuel this exodus, creating further division in and potential challenges to our already struggling public education system. This bill has the potential only to benefit lawyers eager to profit from tort claims that could arise from the harm caused children by age-inappropriate material.

The Oregon Republican Party believes that all children deserve a safe, excellent, quality, and unbiased education. Parents and legal guardians have the primary right and responsibility to educate their children in the manner they choose. Oregon's public education system, in partnership with parents and legal guardians, must improve to ensure that all our children have the opportunity and tools to be successful in life and to be responsible citizens of our state and nation. It is not the role of the Oregon Legislature, the Oregon Department of Education, or the Oregon Education Association to override the judgment of local school boards and communities; it is the responsibility of local school boards working with parents and community members to guarantee that quality education and academic excellence is available to every student of our public schools.

Despite its title, SB 1583 is not about discrimination, it is about robbing parents, teachers, school boards, and communities of the right to discern what is best for their own local schools.

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