



February 14, 2024

Senate Committee on Education
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Good afternoon Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, and Members of the Committee:

Oregon Library Association (OLA) is in support of SB 1583, which will bring the clarity needed to help schools and school boards comply with the prohibition on discrimination required by ORS 659.850. Information collected and reported by the State Library of Oregon shows that challenges to materials in school libraries have increased, and in many cases, they are grounded in discrimination. OLA believes that this bill clarifies important protections to prevent discrimination in both the selection and removal of materials from school libraries. We want to thank Sen. Lew Frederick for bringing the bill forward and ask that you all support the -4 amendments and move the bill forward this session.

The Oregon Library Association has over 1,000 members statewide, including public, school, academic, law, and special libraries. The organization represents the interest of libraries and library staff and those they serve throughout Oregon.

Since the 1980's the number of teacher librarians has dropped from over 850, to just over 150 statewide. According to the Institute of Museum and Library Services Slide Study (libslide.org), seventy-five percent of school districts have no teacher-librarians. This means that across the state there are often no librarians to help choose materials and respond to book removal inquires. We believe this bill provides clarification that will help schools with and without librarians reduce workloads in responding to any materials bans that are blatantly discriminatory. This bill will make existing anti-discrimination laws stronger and clearer.

Please help support the rights of all students to read the books that speak to them and represent both who they are and the broader world in which we live by passing this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeremy Skinner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeremy Skinner
Legislative Committee Chair
Oregon Library Association