

Submitter: Maelagh Baker
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1583

TO: Senate Committee on Education
FROM: Maelagh Lockett Baker
RE: Support for SB1583
Date: 02/15/2024

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber & and Members of the Senate Committee on Education,

My name is Maelagh Baker and I am writing to urge you to support SB1583, which will prohibit discrimination based on the race, religion, ability, country of origin, sexuality, or gender of the individuals featured in the content of educational and library materials in public elementary and secondary schools in Oregon. In Oregon, we have seen countless efforts to ban books that feature LGBTQIA2S+ topics or individuals and restrict access for students to understand the positive contributions of individuals of marginalized identities who have contributed to our society. This bill creates a statewide standard ensuring freedom of information both to users of that information, as well as providers of that information, for example librarians and educators. It also ensures people have access to accurate and representative information about their histories, communities and selves, and creates more room for understanding over prejudice in Oregon.

As someone born and raised in southwestern Oregon, an area where internet is still not reliably available in every home, the library was absolutely a place to broaden my world. Now that I have nephews and nieces, I see them expanding their understanding of what is possible through what they read. I strongly believe in choice. We must protect libraries and educational institutions as places where many views, histories, and imagined futures are available.

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.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my perspective. We hope you will vote YES to support and advance SB1583.

In gratitude,
Maelagh Baker

