

Submitter: Eila Overcash
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: SB1583

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate bill 1583. As a high school librarian dedicated to fostering a love of reading and intellectual freedom among our students, I believe that censorship in any form undermines the principles of education and democracy.

Books are powerful tools. They have the ability to expose readers to diverse perspectives, challenge conventional wisdom, and spark meaningful conversations. By restricting access to certain books or censoring their content, we not only limit students' intellectual curiosity but also hinder their ability to develop critical thinking skills and empathy.

In my role as a librarian, I have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact that books can have on students' lives. Whether it's a novel that opens their eyes to a different culture, a memoir that helps them understand a different lived experience, or a graphic novel that affirms their own life experiences, every book has the potential to shape their worldview and broaden their horizons.

However, this transformative power is only possible if students have access to a wide range of literature that reflects the diversity of human experiences and perspectives. Banning books based on subjective criteria such as controversial themes, sensitive topics, or differing ideologies not only deprives students of valuable learning opportunities but also undermines their right to access information and ideas freely.

Furthermore, censorship sends a dangerous message to students that certain topics are off-limits or that certain viewpoints are unacceptable. Instead of shielding students from challenging or uncomfortable subjects, we should be empowering them to engage with complex issues thoughtfully and critically. By providing access to a diverse range of literature and supporting open dialogue, we can create an inclusive and intellectually stimulating environment where students feel empowered to explore, question, and learn.

I believe that Senate bill 1583 is a crucial step towards protecting the intellectual freedom of students and promoting an inclusive culture in our schools. By safeguarding the right of students to access a wide range of literature without fear of censorship, we can ensure that our schools remain places of learning, exploration, and discovery for generations to come.

Eila Overcash

Summit High School teacher-librarian
Bend-La Pine Schools