

IN FAVOR OF SENATE BILL 1583

I am writing strongly in favor of Senate Bill 1583. I wish we had this bill on the table sooner! Too many underrepresented children are being erased from our schools and libraries in Oregon based on discriminatory book bannings by individuals who wish to push their personal ideology and dogma on all children in Oregon. As an elementary school library staff member in Tigard-Tualatin School District I can report that if a parent does not wish their own child to check out certain library books, they can alert library staff and that student's account can be flagged with a pop-up everytime that student tries to check out a book, detailing the parents' wishes. In short, these parents are not having their rights taken away in regard to their own children. Those same parents DO NOT have the right to make those decisions for all children in the state of Oregon. Each parent has the right to make reading decisions for *their own* children. This bill prevents a small, vocal minority from usurping the parental rights of the majority.

Almost every book challenge or ban comes down to discrimination in some way, shape, or form; usually it's discrimination against BIPOC or LGBTQ-related content or authors. These communities have protected status in the state of Oregon, and so should books deemed appropriate by professional educators who see the full spectrum of Oregon students in their classrooms and libraries.

This week in the library I taught my elementary students how to use keywords to search the catalog to find books that are "mirrors" (books that reflect their own identity) and "windows" (books that reflect the identities of those different from themselves). I taught them how to search using keywords or phrases such as "African American," "Black," "Mexican," "anxiety," "dyslexia," "LGBTQ," "Muslim," among many others. I explained that by reading "window-type" books, it helps us to have empathy. I couldn't imagine facing my students if all or most of the books attached to those keywords vanished from the shelves.

As a parent who is actively raising children in the state of Oregon, who also works as an Oregon educator, I ask you to please pass Senate Bill 1583.

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