

Submitter: Horst Meister
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: SB1583

I support SB 1583's purpose of preventing censorship in schools and libraries.

Opponents of SB 1583 claim they are protecting children from accessing harmful materials.

Censorship is futile. Anyone, even children, can access whatever they are interested in by using a phone or a computer with an internet connection.

Outright prohibition actually increases curiosity; the kiddos want to know what all the fuss is about. It's safer for children to access materials under school supervision that were vetted by educators because who knows what children might find on the internet.

Opponents of SB 1583 assert that parental rights are violated when materials that conservative parents disapprove of are available to their children.
Well, my wife and I supervised our child.

So-called parental rights is a political rationalization for giving very conservative parents veto power over educational materials by allowing them to exclude materials they don't approve of. Parental rights are not being supported if policies deny parents who are not religious conservatives an equal voice in educational materials.

Much of the fuss centers on materials addressing LGBTQ issues. Liberal parents, open-minded parents and non-religious parents may well want their children to have access to materials dealing with LGBTQ issues. Religious beliefs, no matter how strongly felt, are not sufficient reason to deny the rights of parents who don't agree with those beliefs. The Free Expression clause in the Constitution grants to everyone a constitutional right to free expression of their religious beliefs, not just to religious conservatives.

The opinions of all parents deserve equal consideration.

Religious conservative parents are entitled to their opinions and their beliefs, but the same is true for parents who are neither conservative nor particularly religious. Conservative assertions that LGBTQ materials are obscene are the opinions of religious conservatives. A substantial majority of Oregonians disagree with extremist conservative views.

Granting censorship rights to one group of parents that are denied to the majority of parents is repugnant to the Constitution. The Constitutional standard is that we are all equal before the law, and we all have the same rights.