



March 5, 2024

House Committee on Rules
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Testimony in Support of SB 1583

Chair Fahey, Co-Vice Chairs Krop & Helfrich & and Members of the House Committee on Rules,

My name is Christina Nguyen. I am the Communications Director at the ACLU of Oregon. The ACLU of Oregon's main organizational testimony is set out in the testimony submitted by Mariana Garcia Medina, Senior Policy Associate, and Sandy Chung, Executive Director. Today I am submitting this testimony because the issue of discriminatory book bans personally matters to me – especially because I have a family of educators – and therefore I wanted to share information from my family and urge your support of Senate Bill 1583A.

I believe many teachers would be here to testify today in support of the bill but they are committed to their students. I'd like to share reflections from family members who teach in the Hillsboro School District:

My mother in law, Mindy Striplin, teaches at Ladd Acres Elementary shared, "As a first grade teacher, it is very important that my students see themselves reflected in the stories and books that I have available in my classroom. I currently have a class of 25 students. Sixteen of those students are students of color and are under-represented in the amount of literature the district provides or is able to provide because of funding. I have students with two moms and students with two dads. I have students who have trouble understanding what is going on with their feelings and how to work through them. I have students with different cultural beliefs and different religious beliefs. All of these students deserve to have books and stories that show they are not alone and they are cared for in my classroom. Books that represent these students are a huge step in the right direction. All students benefit from these books and inclusive teaching. Finally, take a minute to look at and think about the laws that you have put in place requiring us to teach our students. I just recently completed teaching comprehensive sex education (poorly named for first grade, I might add) required to teach by the State of Oregon. In those lessons, I taught the correct names of our body parts, lessons on gender, friendship, "never, never rules", and how to keep ourselves safe. We are transparent in



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giving parents the option to opt their students out of any part of the lessons and they will always have that choice. Public school is where everyone should be allowed to be seen and heard for who they are and that includes in the books that are available to them to read.”

My father in law, Mark Striplin, teaches at R.A. Brown Middle School shared, “I taught U.S. History for 22 years. During that time I spent many years teaching using white washed textbooks that emphasized the contributions and accomplishments of a select group of people. I brought in external texts to bring other stories to light as well as challenge the accepted narrative. I found that doing so, students who didn’t participate in discussions suddenly became empowered to have a voice in the classroom. They shared family stories and experiences in our classroom discussions, providing rich context and to our country’s history. Taking away books that challenge the traditional and mainstream narrative of our history will have negative effects on the classrooms that use them. I encourage the members of our legislature to protect ideas, even those that make us uncomfortable.”

My sister in law, Chelsea Striplin, teaches at Witch Hazel Elementary shared, “As a second grade dual language teacher, book bans would mean ripping my students from their identities. Each and every one of my students are different and deserve to see themselves in their surroundings. They all come from different walks of life, and they cannot be seen in the books of the past that reflect one viewpoint. Books that have been created by and for people who have been systemically underserved, are for the greater good. They not only help people see themselves, but they teach others about empathy and diversity. I urge you all to consider a life without empathy and understanding, a life where you’re ignored and tossed aside. That’s the world you would condemn us to if we allow book bans.”

Thank you,

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