

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education Support of SB 1583 and Prevent Censorship in Oregon

March 6, 2024

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

My name is Dr. Pat DeLaquil, and I am an energy system modeler and climate policy analyst, and you normally hear me testify on your work to advance a healthy climate and a green economy. However, today I am urging you to support SB 1583, 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. Fighting climate change is not enough, we need to insist on a more open, equitable, and just future because both have the same roots in hierarchy, and their embedded privilege from having slanted the rules in their favor.

We have already 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.

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 hear my story today. We hope you will vote YES to support and advance SB1583.

Best regards,
Dr. Pat DeLaquil
Gresham, OR