

Submitter: Laura Axon
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1098

Good Morning Chair Frederick and Vice Chair Weber,

I am submitting testimony as a licensed school library educator, and I do so on behalf of 40 of my licensed colleagues in Portland, OR with me here today.

I was born in Roseburg, OR, and raised in Douglas County, attending 13 small-town, rural Oregon schools. I am the daughter of a logger and a public defender.

The only time a book ever upset me was at a friend's house in Glide, Oregon, during a slumber party. It was a book belonging to the kids or parents in that home, not one curated by a professional school librarian in a school library. This book did not include the voices or stories of Oregon's marginalized communities.

In my career as a school librarian, I have had three books in the collections I steward challenged all from marginalized community groups. Fortunately, none of these books were removed, as I had district and administrative support for their inclusion.

As a member of the Oregon Historical Society Teacher Advisory Council, I strongly oppose the removal of difficult yet essential stories from Oregon's past, as well as the erasure of stories belonging to marginalized communities. These narratives are vital to our collective understanding and growth as a state.

School libraries provide a space for intellectual freedom and serve as essential hubs for the critical teaching of media literacy. They equip Oregon students with the skills to ask, "Whose voice is missing from Oregon and its history?" and to engage with diverse perspectives thoughtfully and critically.

I urge you to support Senate Bill 1098 and ensure that our school libraries continue to provide inclusive, historically accurate, and thoughtfully curated collections for all students.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely, Laura Axon