

Chair Frederick, Co-Chair Weber, and members of the committee.

My name is Tracy Scharn, an Oregon resident and librarian, and I am writing to urge you to support [Senate Bill 1098](#), 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 K-12 public schools in Oregon.

In Oregon, we have seen countless efforts to ban books that feature LGBTQIA2S+, Black people, Indigenous people, and other people of color, 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 students have access to accurate and representative information about their histories, communities and selves.

I know personally how powerful it is to have access to materials that both reflect your own lived experiences and help you learn about others. When I was growing up there weren't a lot of kids' books that showed families like mine, and I often felt invisible, embarrassed, and even scared to be different. I was an avid reader, and because we were poor I relied entirely on the library for my access to reading materials. I remember so clearly the first time a teacher recommended a book from the library that showed a family like mine. It was middle school and the kindness of that teacher to see me and what I needed had a tremendous impact on my sense of belonging and safety in school. That experience was so powerful that it has stuck with me into adulthood.

As a librarian, I am so glad to see that there are books now that represent a broad spectrum of experiences, and I'm grateful to the many writers who have put such effort into making visible the many varied experiences of life. I hope that students will be able to connect with books that resonate with them and their experiences, just as I was able to.

[Senate Bill 1098](#) protects student's right to see themselves represented in the books, materials and classrooms they learn from and to learn about diverse communities and people.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my story today. We urge you to vote YES to support and advance [Senate Bill 1098](#).

Thank you,

Tracy Scharn