

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Community Members Urge the Support of Senate Bill 1583A to Protect Students' Freedom to Read

SALEM, Ore. — Today, librarians, educators, students, and democracy and civil rights advocates showed up in strong force to testify in support of SB 1583A before the House Committee on Rules. The Oregon State Senate already passed SB 1583A, and it must now be passed by the Oregon State House in order to become law. With [attempts to ban books by extremist groups on the rise nationwide](#) and in Oregon, supporters of SB 1583A were united in asking Oregon State House representatives to proactively protect students' right to read and learn. Although existing laws require an inclusive selection of instructional materials and generally prohibit discrimination in our schools, no current law explicitly prohibits the discriminatory banning or censorship of books and materials in our state's public schools..

Discriminatory attempts to ban books and censor educational materials are a harmful and unnecessary drain on our public schools' limited resources. By setting clear state statutory protections against discriminatory book bans and censorship, SB 1583A will help avert unlawful actions by rogue school boards and officials which will assist Oregon school districts to avoid wasting their limited funds and capacity on responding to time-wasting, frivolous censorship efforts.

- ["Book bans are tactics used by small groups of extremists"](#); the majority of voters and parents oppose book bans. When government officials allow discriminatory book bans that often censor the stories of historically-marginalized communities and identities, this undercuts America's democracy, which at its heart, consists of people and communities of diverse backgrounds and identities. It is critical for Oregon State House representatives to pass SB 1583A, which is a clear statement that anti-democratic, discriminatory censorship has no place in our public schools," says Mariana Garcia Medina, Senior Policy Associate, ACLU of Oregon.
- "SB 1583A will support the success of all students in our public schools. [Research shows](#) that students who receive a culturally responsive and racially inclusive education are more academically engaged, perform better in school, have enhanced self-perception and graduate at higher rates," says Emily O'Neal, Intellectual Freedom Committee Chair, Oregon Library Association.
- "In Oregon, we have 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 to our society. This bill 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," says Kyndall Mason, Executive Director, Basic Rights Oregon
- "Students deserve access to an inclusive and holistic education. When schools engage in discriminatory books bans, the history and lived experiences of women, people of color, and LGBTQ2SIA+ people are effectively erased. This censorship of conversations

about race, gender, and sexuality is harmful to educators, authors, and families,” says Beth Chvilicek, Policy Outreach Coordinator, Unite Oregon.

- “Being a Latino student, it is hard to find books that represent me. There are few authors that wrote books about my experience, or even Latino history. Conserving the few books there are on the bookshelf in my school is not the only good thing this bill offers us; it would maintain books with a wide variety of experiences that students can explore. Having knowledge about people that are different from you makes you realize that we have more in common than not,” says Cesar Salinas, student, Woodburn High School.

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