

My name's Alejandra Rosales and I'm here to testify in support of Senate Bill 1583.

I was born and raised in Oregon and I'm now an educator in the state. And I want to talk about my experiences and the importance of having materials in the classroom with a wide range of identities and cultures.

Growing up in Oregon, my personal educational experiences were filled with books and history that never acknowledged the contributions or stories of people who look like me. This lack of representation greatly interfered with my feelings of belonging in school. And often what it made me feel was that my people, my community, was not welcomed or appreciated in education. So having had this experience as a student, it became very imperative to me that once I became an educator, that I created a classroom where all my students felt safe and represented.

One of the ways that I've done this is by having a classroom library that has diverse characters and stories that reflect the students in my classroom and the world around them.

I've personally seen the reflection of the positive impact of having these books because I have kids who come up to me and they tell me, this character looks like me. This character reminds me of somebody that I love. And I just think that's very important. So I really think that this bill is vital to helping kids feel represented in their classrooms.

I want to leave you with a small poem that my students and I recite every day. And it carries the way that we interact with each other and even people who are different than us. And that is, "You are my other me. If I love and respect you, I love and respect myself. If I do harm to you, I do harm to myself."

So please love and respect these students and support. Bill 1583.

Thank you.