

Hello, representatives of North Dakota. My name is Benji, and I am a teenager from Fargo. I speak in opposition of House Bill #1205.

Not only does this bill seek to restrict our access to valuable educational material across the state of North Dakota, it aims to reduce the representation of already marginalized groups of people. This directly infringes on our first amendment rights as US Citizens and further limits historical, cultural and sexual education in this country. This bill benefits no one who remains true to the founding principles of the United States of America.

Representatives, I ask you this. Would you erase history because it does not fit your worldview? Would you destroy culture because it makes you uncomfortable? Would you have us burn our books out of fear?

If the answer is yes, then you must ask yourself a bigger question. What separates you from the instigators of World War II? The list of distinctions grows smaller and smaller with every homophobic bill proposed, while the list of similarities grows ever longer.

I am aware that this bill claims to protect education, but I am unconvinced. If that were the case, we would not be discussing book restrictions. In times like these, where teenage pregnancy is rampant and STD rates exceed those of every other developed country on the globe, I beg of you, do not stifle sexual education. Instead, develop infrastructure to support it. Use the power you have to promote positive change for everyone.

What you decide today is incredibly important to me, as it affects many of my closest friends. I would like you to know that my generation is watching, and our existence is not a crime. Our identities are not perverse, and LGBTQ+ literature does not harm you. Do not move forward with this bill.

Thank you for your time.