

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 1205

House Judiciary Committee on House Bill 1205

Date of Hearing: January 17, 2023 10:15 a.m.

Debra L. Hoffarth, 1320 11th Street SW, Minot, ND 58701

This written testimony is presented in opposition to HB 1205, which is an attempt to censor books and block North Dakota residents from participating in free speech.

My local library has a policy on “Collection Management” which considers the developmental and information needs of children and teens.¹ This policy includes a right of the public to object to materials and a process for resolving those objections. It also places the responsibility for determining if a book is appropriate on the parents of the child, where it should rightly land.

Libraries are one of the only places where anyone can freely find information. To allow any individual to demand the removal of a book and the library must do so, is allowing the power of one individual to censor the availability of information to society at large. This is a ridiculous concept. We need a diversity of books available to ensure that people can fully research topics and be informed. Libraries are a safe haven for people to learn and should not be a place where political rhetoric and ideals determine available information.

This proposed legislation also is an attempt to usurp the authority of the parents in determining what is appropriate for their children. Parents know best the values of their family and should be allowed to educate their children on those ideals.

The government should not be in the business in blocking access to information or censoring books.

Please oppose HB1205.

Debra L. Hoffarth
1320 11th Street SW
Minot, ND 58701

¹ Minot Public Library Collection Management Policy
(<https://drive.google.com/file/d/16AW7LK74PaGuWH3FAiw3MbGrGtgs6pcA/view>)