

I am imploring you to vote "do not pass" on HB1205.

As a library employee in a number of different libraries over the years, it is frightening to imagine this kind of censorship imposed on what is displayed on our shelves and contained in our collection. It may seem far-fetched to compare this kind of legislation with Nazi authoritarianism, but it is not. Nearly 25,000 books were burned under the Nazi regime in 1933 – and that initial book burning proved to be just the beginning of a massive undertaking to remove more and more rights from certain people in Germany.

I am especially saddened to see in the bill's definition of "explicit sexual material" the terms: "gender identity, sexual identity, [and] sexual preferences." The inclusion of these terms seems like a direct, unapologetic attack on our state's queer population. There are many books which describe people in relationships without ever mentioning the act of sexual relations. To assume that a book with a queer relationship in it is inherently sexually deviant in some way is a repugnant form of bigotry. In addition, the term "sexual preferences" would include heterosexual relationships...would we really be forced to remove all books that depicted *any* kind of relationship?

As a member of the board of Dakota Outright, I have seen firsthand the effects that anti-LGBTQ+ language and attitudes have had on North Dakotans who do not identify as cis-gender or straight. I know personally people who cannot be themselves in this state because they fear ridicule, anger, cruelty, and possible discrimination from their own government. The suicide rate is high among the LGBTQ+ community, and adding exacerbating factors like this bill, only adds to the problem.

Please vote "do not pass" on this bill.

Thank you.