

Good Afternoon, Representatives Lefor and Steiner and members of the committee. My name is Dr. Liann Hanson and I am the Board President of the West Fargo Library. I have been a board member and board president since 2021. I have also taught for 5 years and have been a school administrator for 16 years. Most recently, I am a district administrator. I have been an educator in the states of Colorado, Minnesota, and North Dakota. I have seen a wide variety of library systems and the importance that libraries have on patrons and its community in different states and school districts. My submission here is to publicly oppose House Bill 1205.

House Bill 1205 promotes censorship. To exclude certain books, ideology, or people is a form of censorship. House Bill 1205 promotes and supports inequity by design. All patrons of libraries deserve inclusion, belonging, and dignity. For libraries to continue to be a place of inclusion and support, we must continue to create environments that foster a sense of belonging by honoring the dignity of each and every person. "Inclusion is not a strategy to help people fit into the systems and structures which exist in our societies; it is about transforming those systems and structures to make it better for everyone. Inclusion is about creating a better world for everyone," states Diane Richler in *Ruthless Equity* by Ken Williams. Libraries create structures to make better systems and support for all people.

We need to support all kids, families, and communities. Providing a wide range of materials that meet the needs of the individual is the way to do that. Allowing parents to support their children and the books they check out is the way to do that. Allowing libraries to enforce their policies is the way to do that. Supporting libraries, its staff, and the library board to do their job is the way to do that.

The West Fargo Public Library and libraries across the state also have current policies in place in regards to purchasing and maintaining materials which meet the standards of their community. This bill could potentially override those standards and policies, which could lead to a more lax standard for the types of materials that are made available for the use of public library patrons. This bill is overly broad and does not have an adequate system of appeal or oversight in place. Overall, the proposed bill is highly controversial and will limit freedom of expression, override existing policies, and lead to a decline in the quality of library services available to the public.

It is important for the libraries in the state of North Dakota to continue to provide a welcoming, safe, and inclusionary environment for all patrons. One way we can do that is to oppose House Bill 1205 and to continue to support the systems and policies libraries already have in place.

House Bill 1205 doesn't do any of that. It promotes censorship, bigotry, and autocratic leadership. I oppose House Bill 1205 and I urge you to do the same.

I appreciate you taking the time to read my testimony. Thank you for serving library patrons and its community throughout the state of North Dakota in an equitable way by opposing House Bill 1205.