

Dear Judiciary committee:

Lawrence R. Klemin - Chairman Mary Schneider, Karen Karls - Vice Chairman

Landon Bahl, Cole Christensen, Claire Cory, Donna Henderson, SuAnn Olson, Nico Rios

Shannon Roers Jones, Bernie Satrom, Lori VanWinkle and Steve Vetter

North Dakota is a free-thinking state with our roots as varied followers of many faiths, attitudes, standards and values. I strongly oppose bills HB 1205 and SB 2123 as a librarian for teens. Teens are trying to make sense of the world around them, themselves, their feelings and other people they come into contact with, but also those they may never meet in real life. They have the right to read, and decide for themselves what to think.

Books and other materials offer a mirror, a window, a door to new ideas, thoughts and feelings they may agree with, ardently disagree with, try on for size or dispense with entirely. The choice is up to the reader. It is however, their choice. In the case of both of these bills, the teens may be looking for answers to feelings, researching a syndrome or word they came across, or wanting to know more about the human condition. Curiosity is not a sin. To appreciate another's ideas is not to agree.

Parents need to parent and if they object to materials their children are accessing, they need to object to THEIR children's access not other peoples' children. Parents should step up and read the books with their children they are unsure about and dialogue openly, not shut down communication. Many of the materials objected to, are objected to not because they are giving incorrect information, but because they are giving information at all. Is this really what we stand for as North Dakotans?

Censorship is mistaken. Have we become a Communist state like China where we cannot express a thought, publish it or think for ourselves? I may greatly despise what you have to say but I will defend your right to say it. Restricting what can be read, discussed, commented upon or otherwise deliberated only makes what you have to say that much more interesting. Teens only go read the "banned" books or other materials in secret. Preventing the library from keeping a copy of a work only makes banned books more desirable and creates shame, guilt and embarrassment from reading. Isn't being a teenager hard enough? Bring North Dakota back to our free-thinking roots. Vote NO!

Sincerely,

Pam Carswell (She/Her)

Teen Librarian

Minot Public Library

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