

Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

My name is Rachel Kercher and I am the Youth Services librarian at the Leach Public Library in Wahpeton. I am writing to you today to ask that you vote "Do not pass" on bill 1205. This bill is vague, subjective, and contradictory, and its outcome will affect every library user in North Dakota.

This bill requires the removal and disposal of sexually explicit materials from libraries in order to develop collections that are consistent with the purpose of libraries. These materials are not being moved to another section of the library; they are being completely removed from the library based on a subjective list of topics. Certain types of content are not being censored; books are being banned. Censorship and book banning go directly against the purpose of the library. Public libraries provide information to meet the wants and needs of our patrons, regardless of whether we agree with that information or not. How are libraries supposed to serve their communities and fulfil their purpose if they are not allowed to collect all types of books?

This issue is larger than a handful of controversial books. This bill, if passed, will restrict the reading rights of all patrons, even if they are not minors or the parent of a minor child, based on a subjective list of topics. How is "deviant sexual intercourse" being defined? How are "sexual activity" and "sexual perversion" being defined? Where do those definitions come from and why were they chosen? Will libraries be given detailed and objective guidelines based on these definitions? Will we receive guidance from the legislature and state agencies to help us through the censorship process? How will the terms of this bill be enforced? If you cannot answer these questions, how can librarians be expected to? If you cannot answer these questions, you should vote "do not pass" on this bill.