

68th Legislative Assembly

Representatives: Lefor and Steiner

Hello. I am writing this to oppose HB #1205. The State of North Dakota legislators should not censor the people who live in North Dakota by removing books which they deem as harmful because of how the human body or human experience is portrayed. As an adult, I believe I know what is and what isn't good for myself nor should the State Legislators think that they should invade a public institution or tell the institution how to display items that show or discuss the human body or human condition. What makes this legislative body think they need to protect the citizens from exposure to books and other items that display or discuss the human body? What are you afraid of? Clearly the adage of "knowledge is power" isn't being considered.

If you look back at history you all have to admit that some of the greatest pieces of art are filled with the human body and some of those pieces, which are valuable and on display in cathedrals or in museums, are pictures, paintings, sculptures of nude or partially nude people. Even today the depiction of Christ on the cross has His tortured body partially clothed. Under the guidelines of this bill, the State would be removing books, magazines, pamphlets including the Bible, would be removed or considered illegal. Just think of that impact, removing informative information such as medical books, science books, religious books, autobiographies, fiction and non-fiction books and documentaries. Again, I ask, what are you afraid of?

This bill is actually a bill that hurts people, let me share an example from my own life. I grew up in a Catholic/Methodist home. As a young girl entering puberty, my mom didn't educate me on what changes my body was starting and back then our school system didn't have sex ed or anything remotely close to it. I was clueless as to what my body was going through. An older sister pulled me aside and told me your body is changing and here is a book. Your going to get your period soon so this book will tell you what to do. That was it. My introduction to puberty given to me via a book. No parental help, my older sister told me she was giving me this book because our mom never told her a thing and my sister had to learn from friends about puberty when she was going through it. You see, some parents are uncomfortable about talking about the human body. Let's understand this, there is nothing wrong or shameful concerning the human body. As a parent, I made the choice to do what my mother didn't do. I educated my children with talks about the human body and I supplemented the discussions with books. The books helped me articulate information geared towards their age. The books helped educate me when I was young and had no one to talk to. I believe the lack of education from parents in my day was common, unfortunately. I refused to continue my mother's mindset and took control of my children's education concerning their bodies. Knowledge is power, I chose to empower my girls. Why are you trying to stifle and stunt the growth of knowledge for ND youth? Is it the fact that the legislators feel their own discomfort and embarrassment concerning the human body? That's what this bill smacks of; along with the resurgence of Hitler mentality. The removal of books and other media that educate people is completely and totally a Nazi move. Haven't you learned from the Nazi past that censorship is cruel and hurts people?

Kids in our schools need to be educated on their bodies and mental health. Why would you want to keep North Dakota kids ignorant? Schools are a place to learn and to keep a curriculum void of facts and information from the students is keeping North Dakota kids ignorant. Kids go to the library to do research for papers, to learn on their own about interests they have and unfortunately some have to use the library to find out what is going on in their life because they can't talk to a parent or guardian. Let's face it, NoDaks aren't the most open minded and free-thinking group of people. Is that the intended goal for North Dakota, to keep their youth ignorant of facts of life? What happens when our youth go to college outside of North Dakota? What a gut punch that experience would be for them, to learn that their state keeps facts of the human body out of their reach, to stunt the knowledge of our youth? Why would you want that for our kids.

This bill is designed to erase the rights of North Dakotans. This bill is constructed in a way in which the false belief of if we remove sexual condition from the public then we reduce instances of teen pregnancy, queer and transgender people in North Dakota is erased. That is a very narrow minded and ignorant mindset. The youth of North Dakota will go through puberty and their curious nature will lead our youth to search out the information in other ways. You all must have forgotten what it was like to be young and all the curiosity and exploring you did. This bill is causing problems it's not helping our youth.

You do understand the when society makes something taboo, society is making the issue exciting and therefore more intriguing to people? You get that right?

There is no reason to keep this material out of the hands of North Dakotans. Kids need to be educated on the human body and if I want to read something that has pictures of text that mentions nude bodies then it's my right to go to the local library and check it out. Book banning is ripped right from the Nazi handbook.

There are policies and procedures already in place that shield children from sexually explicit books and media. I thought the GOP party believes in less government; this is not following party lines. This bill steps into people's education and home life. This bill doesn't protect anyone.

If you don't want this type of books or magazines in your home fine, no one is making you read or look at what offends you. However, to impose your beliefs due to religious following or due to lack of being comfortable with the human body is overstepping your boundaries and again forcing your beliefs on others. We all right now enjoy having options, do not take away that right because of your fears or insecurities. When you remove your religious beliefs from this argument, you have to acknowledge that this bill harms our educating the youth of North Dakota. Separation of Church and State comes into play here.

My religious beliefs are not in line with yours. That doesn't mean your beliefs are correct and mine is wrong and vice versa. Whether someone is religious or not the fact is that this bill is censoring schools and homes which impacts education and lives of NoDaks. This bill is harmful and I encourage you to vote DO NOT PASS.

Thank you,
Kristie Miller

North Dakota Citizen and Parent