

Chair Larson and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I urge a 'DO NOT PASS' on HB 1205. I am quite concerned about this bill and the consequences of it passing in its current form. I am a mother of two and I am also beginning my second term as a board of trustees member for Carnegie Regional Library in Grafton.

HB 1205 has been advertised as a bill that is aiming to protect children. I agree with that aim, but after reading this bill, listening to testimony and listening to the House Judiciary Committee work on this bill, I can see that it goes past protecting children and into the arena of censorship. I do not agree with censorship of materials accessible for adults in the public library and other settings. I do not feel that it is the responsibility of the Legislature or Libraries to decide if adults may access materials that may contain something some people find objectionable. There are ideas in materials in our library that I personally object to, but I do not get to decide if other citizens may access those ideas. I will defend the right of others to have access to those ideas.

I feel there are less restrictive ways to go about protecting children from sexually explicit material. I see that allowing this sort of broad restrictions is a slippery slope to someday restricting other topics and ideas that some deem objectionable. Further the language of this bill is a bit broad and subjective: who gets to decide which "works of art that, when taken as a whole, have serious artistic significance, or works of anthropological significance," what constitutes sexual "perversion," or what kind of intercourse is considered "deviant"? My experience tells me that many people will have different opinions on these terms.

Libraries already have policies in place to develop collections that are appropriate and useful for their patrons. Not everyone will agree on every book, but the First Amendment guarantees freedom of speech and the right of citizens to access information.

It is my job as a parent to know what my children are accessing at the library, online, etc. That is not a responsibility I want to hand over to the State. It is my right, and the right of all adults in this country to access the materials of their choice as long as they are not illegal. I do not want that right taken away from anyone, even if I do not agree with the ideas they choose to consume. I fervently hope to see this bill marked 'DO NOT PASS' and see it defeated in the North Dakota Senate.

Thanks for your time and consideration.