

Senators,

Thank you for taking the time to read testimony about bills laid before you this session. I hope you are taking to heart the vast amount of comments and evidence surrounding the impact so many of the proposed bills will have on the citizens of our state. In North Dakota we have always prided ourselves as friendly and welcoming. Unfortunately, many bills this session run contrary to these thoughts.

I feel it is my duty as a citizen of this state to voice my objection, in this instance specifically to HB 1205 and to SB 2360. I have spoken to and heard from many North Dakotans on both sides of the political spectrum who agree these bills are at best a waste of time, and at worst are critically destructive. I understand it is your wish to protect the children of North Dakota, and I applaud that wish. However, these bills do not protect anybody. Instead, what these bills do is give unprecedented power to individuals to control what others have access to. For centuries public libraries have been troves of information, resources, and yes, entertainment, and they continue to be just that. They are not dens of pornography, and to those who claim otherwise I say shame on you. What I have access to at my library should be limited only to what I wish to access, and to what trained librarians have determined should be on the shelves. What others wish to have access to is up to them; I have no intention on imposing my beliefs on what they read. For example, I have absolutely no desire to read "50 Shades of Grey," but I also have no right to prevent another from checking that book out at the library. I have two teenaged children who have grown up in public libraries. What they have access to should be limited only to what they wish to access as influenced by the way my wife and I have chosen to raise them. We participate in the lives of our children. We are responsible for teaching them values. And we have the right to decide what is or is not appropriate. To claim the legislature has a duty to make these decisions for every library patron, every family, is the very height of hubris.

Individual freedoms have been high on the priority list for many of you. We have seen this in action during the pandemic especially. You fought for a parent's right to choose whether or not their children should mask and whether or not to vaccinate their children. These bills do not protect our children. Instead they harm our children by showing them how easy it is for government to step in and tell them and their parents what is right. Continue your fight for individual freedom and protection of our children by allowing us, the people and parents of North Dakota, to make those decisions on our own. I urge you to present a "do not pass" on these destructive bills, and to vote no when they are presented for a floor vote. Thank you.