

I have loved libraries since I was a small child. I grew up in Oakes, ND, and was a very frequent visitor to our local public library. As a shy child, I found reading to be a welcome and wonderful way to escape into other worlds. I read so many books that by age 11, I had exhausted our small library's Children's and Young Adult sections. And so I ventured into the Adult section, an area of the library I had never paid attention to before. There I discovered, over the following years, John Grisham's gritty court mysteries, Torey Hayden's fascinating books about child psychology, Sue Grafton's compelling mysteries, Stephen King's deliciously scary books (I loved *Pet Sematary* and *Cujo*), and yes, Danielle Steel's and Nora Roberts's romance books. As an extremely well-read and mature young person, I was ready to dive into these kinds of books – and my parents approved my reading choices. Not every young adult is ready to read these kinds of books, and that is ok – it is up to parents and guardians to help their children make these kinds of choices. Please do not put that responsibility on librarians and other public servants who do not know each young person personally who uses their services.

I work at the Bismarck Public Library and I cannot imagine removing all of our romance books and even books such as the Bible (which has sections about nudity and sex) because our librarians might be prosecuted if a child picks up one of those particular books.

We are library employees, not book police. Books are such a wonderful way to explore and learn and escape to places outside of ourselves. If parents want to restrict what their children read and look at, that is fine. Again, placing that responsibility on libraries and other public places is unmanageable and would be nearly impossible to prosecute.

I will end by echoing a Minot library board member who wrote that people who ban books have never been the “good guys” in history. Please don't be the “bad guys” here: vote DO NOT PASS on SB2123. Thank you.