

House Education Committee

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Chair Heinert and members of the House Education Committee. My name is Jerry Rostad and I serve as a Vice Chancellor of the North Dakota University System (NDUS). I am submitting testimony in support of SB 2278, which calls for a legislative study on the retention of library materials. More specifically, this study will explore the feasibility and desirability of requiring libraries to retain original versions of books and written materials, especially when new editions update language to be more socially progressive, inclusive, or less offensive.

We support this study because it could explore several important questions.

First, we need to understand how any changes would affect library management and archive strategies. The study could help determine who would be responsible for enforcing any changes and how libraries would be audited for compliance.

Next, strategic goals involving inclusivity and modern educational resources might also be influenced as there could be a demand to balance preservation with contemporary relevance. Relatedly, with the rapid progression of technology and particularly artificial intelligence, the study could also evaluate how these technologies impact the updating and alteration of library materials.

Finally, it would be important to understand how the retention of multiple versions of texts might have implications for library storage, resources, and personnel. A financial impact statement could be included, too.

In conclusion, the NDUS advocates for the approval of SB 2278, with an emphasis on careful consideration of the financial and operational impacts on our institutions.