

North Dakota Policymakers, Greetings.

My name is Kevin R. Tengesdal from here in Bismarck. I am writing today to oppose this bill before the 2023 North Dakota Legislative Assembly. SB 2360 (relating to the definition of a public library and required safety policies and technology protection measures) would criminalize schools, colleges, universities, museums, public libraries, and art galleries under state obscenity laws and looks to proactively redefine the Miller Test for obscenity, which has been settled law for over 50 years. As a citizen of North Dakota, I firmly request a unanimous DO NOT PASS on Senate Bill 2360 as presented or amended.

The American Library Association recorded 681 attempts in 2022 to ban or restrict library resources, with 1,651 book titles questioned, up from 1,597 in 2021. According to PEN America, a nonprofit organization that protects and celebrates free expression in the United States, books about queer characters or authored by queer writers were disproportionately challenged or banned during the 2021-2022 school year.

Missouri enacted legislation prohibiting student access to explicit sexual material. In turn, school districts within the state removed works about classical artists from the Renaissance era; Batman and X-Men comic books; graphical displays of Shakespearean work; and the Pulitzer Prize-winning graphic novel about the Holocaust, Maus. These prohibitions could include romance novels and their steamy covers, movies with sex scenes, and any books with images relating to sexual identity or gender identity on the covers or the pages therein.

These pro-censorship bills are vague and prohibit people of all ages from accessing information based on the subjective judgment of what is considered obscene. This censorship would affect every library collection and result in the disposal of thousands of books and movies. Will it include censoring the internet as well? In addition, these bills are so vague and broad in their censorship that the gathered writings of Scripture could be under scrutiny for the explicit sexual material (as initially enumerated by HB 1205):

01] HUMAN MASTURBATION Genesis 38:8-9 whenever he fucked his brothers widow he jacked his jizz on the ground so he wouldnt produce a child for his brother ;

02] DEVIANT SEXUAL INTERCOURSE Ezekiel 16:17 then you took all that fine jewelry I gave you, my gold and my silver, and made dildos of them for your bedrooms ;

03] SEXUAL INTERCOURSE (abundant passages) First Book of Kings 11 King Solomon was obsessed with women. He stole them from pagan nations of which God had clearly warned Solomon lusted with them anyway, refusing to give them up. He screwed a thousand women in all! And they seduced him away from God. As Solomon grew older, his wives beguiled him with their alien gods and he became unfaithfulhe didnt stay true to his God as his father David had done .;

04] DIRECT PHYSICAL STIMULATION OF GENITALS Deuteronomy 25:11-12 the wife of the one man, trying to rescue her husband, grabs the dick and balls of the man hitting him ;

05] SADOMASOCHISTIC ABUSE Ezekiel 23:3 they let their boobs be whipped, and there their supple nipples were twisted hard ; or, 1 Samuel 18: David was delighted to accept the offer. So, before the time limit expired, he and his men went out and killed two hundred Philistines and presented their foreskins to King Saul ;

06] POSTPUBERTAL HUMAN GENITALS Deuteronomy 23:1 No one who had a vasectomy or has his balls removed for any reason may enter any church

07] SEXUAL PREFERENCES (all throughout) First Book of Kings 11 King Solomon was obsessed with women. He stole them from pagan nations of which God had clearly warned Solomon lusted with them anyway, refusing to give them up ;

08] SEXUAL ACTIVITY (numerous passages) 1 Corinthians 7:3-4 The husband should give to his wife her right to

sexual intercourse, and likewise, the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own sexual activities, but the husband does; likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own sexual activities, but the wife does ;

09] SEXUAL PERVERSION (all of the above?) Genesis 2:25 the couple were both naked, neither of them was embarrassed or ashamed ;

10] SEX-BASED CLASSIFICATIONS Ephesians 5:22-24 women are to submit to mens leadership as you submit to the Lord. Men are in charge of women like Christ is in charge of the Church ;

11] SEXUAL IDENTITY Genesis 3:16 God said to the woman, Your sexual orientation will be to bear children in intense pain and suffering, and you shall desire your husbands lusts, and he shall be your master ;

12] GENDER IDENTITY Genesis 1:27 God created human beings in their image, they created them with dicks and balls and others with vulvas and uteruses .

In short, the bible includes hardcore sexual literature questionably appropriate for the age and maturity levels of the individuals who may access the materials. Even though no one gains any sexual morality from reading the bible, it is inherently used for condemning those who sin differently, those with differing loin stirrings.

However, we should be honest: it is not the bible, the internet, or The Birth of Venus these bills will target first it will be those books, novels, and movies with queer stories or by queer authors. Historically these materials have provided and should continue to provide queer youth with a lifeline when they need it most. Libraries are among the few welcome public spaces left for all people to congregate, share ideas, and collaborate without being forced to spend money. Libraries should be places where everyone finds welcome, no matter who they are, and where everyone can see themselves reflected in the material among the stacks. Laws like these make that a lot less likely.

These bills are written with such a thin veneer to attempt to safeguard children, yet one can understand they are targeting marginalized communities and those who advocate with them. North Dakota cannot let a small groups discomfort over any single book or movie become censorship for all. These unreasonable and unnecessary bills would open our institutions, workers, and boards to harassment and allegations under the criminal code. These bills will criminalize schools, colleges and universities, public libraries, and museums for books, ebooks, educational resources, and artwork in their care.

I urge North Dakota Legislators to vote down HB 1205 and SB 2360 and for each North Dakota citizen to contact their representative to denounce censorship.

Yours sincerely,

Kevin R. Tengesdal, Bismarck