



1 I come here today representing NDCEL and all your school leaders and administrators
2 in North Dakota. But I also come to you today as a concerned parent, former English
3 teacher, a history minor with a specialization in Nazi Germany and World War II, and
4 with all that – this bill not only concerns me – it scares me.

5 I don't want my daughters exposed to gross or pornographic material. But I will tell you
6 my concern is NOT with our libraries. It's not. As a teacher I will tell you that because
7 of laws I know are ALREADY in place, that libraries are likely one of the safest places
8 for kids. We've seen scores of parental rights bills. Decisions about children are to be
9 made by the parents. Well, if parents are making decisions that allow their children to
10 have the equivalent of a supercomputer in their hand or in their pocket...banning books
11 in libraries will not produce the result you wish. If you want to ensure an organizing of
12 content and an area where you must be the age of majority to utilize or see books, then
13 so be it. But please don't begin to take on totalitarian rule.

14 Ok – as a teacher I must ask – When you were in English class in high school, did any of
15 you read any works by Shakespeare? The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald? The
16 Catcher in the Rye? To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee? Grapes of Wrath or Of Mice
17 and Men by Steinbeck?? 1984 or Animal Farm by George Orwell? Catch-22? Brave New
18 World? The Jungle by Upton Sinclair? The Scarlet Letter? All Quiet on the Western
19 Front? Diary of Ann Frank? And my favorite as it is ironic and, on this list, Fahrenheit
20 451? Recently Senator Nicole Poolman and I got together and talked about all the books
21 she would have to take out of her AP English Classroom (all titles listed). I've read and
22 taught at some point each of these books as well. All these titles would need to come
23 out of the library. These works of literature would no longer be taught in English

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Executive Director: Aimee Copas-----Government Lead and Special Projects: Kevin Hoferz



1 Classrooms. What are you trying to protect our children from when they still have
2 phones that their parents got them? That the parents have every right to get them?

3 In my role, I've been coming before the legislature for well over a decade. There are only
4 a few legislators left who were here when I started first at NDUS and now with NDCEL.
5 I'm hopeful that this new legislature is still just as thoughtful as the ones I've worked
6 with for the past 14 years. Please do not be the legislature of book banning. The
7 legislature that is essentially attempting to execute the meaning of Fahrenheit 451. The
8 legislature that doesn't take the first amendment rights of citizens seriously. Because
9 our students are entitled to this right too.

10 Tinker vs. Des Moines in 1968 cemented the rights of students in education; they do not
11 lose their rights simply by being in an educational system. Further, Pico vs. Island
12 Trees ruled in 1982 that public schools cannot remove books from schools because it is
13 a First Amendment violation of students' rights. Right now, the fight about books in
14 schools is focused on "parental rights," purposefully ignoring the rights students have
15 to a well-rounded education that teaches them not *what* to think, but *how* to think. That
16 is what including books like the ones just mentioned does. Not only are young people
17 given windows and mirrors into our globe and the people inhabiting it, but they're given
18 the chance to talk about tough, challenging topics that encourage them to dive deeper,
19 to do research, to evaluate the sources of their information, and to ultimately become
20 capable and engaged citizens.

21 If our educators cannot help guiding them through these critical thinking moments –
22 who will? Yes, some parents will – but not all. And even the best parents can't do it as

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1 much as they'd like. We have more dual working parents who struggle to pick up kids
2 from school and get them to events – rarely do they have time to eat a meal
3 together...much less have the time to thoughtfully and carefully with a standard driven
4 set of guideposts to have some of these conversations. It happens some – but the reason
5 we have schools is because as a parent, I want that absolutely dedicated time for my child
6 to be with teachers who do just this as I work to put food on the table for my family. I
7 work in partnership with schools in building the quality of my child as a contributing
8 citizen. Let me say that again – I work in partnership with my school. I need them to
9 help my children to think through these conversations. I need them to have content that
10 challenges the. I am a better person for having had guided exposure to these things.

11 I ask you to please not pass this bill which doesn't protect my children as some might
12 think, but actually limit their opportunity for growth.