

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2360

Mark Jorritsma, Executive Director North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action March 14, 2023

Dear Chairman Klemin and honorable members of the House Judiciary Committee:

North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action is submitting testimony in support of Senate Bill 2360, and respectfully requests that you render a "DO PASS" on this bill.

Our organization and its constituents feel strongly about protecting minors from explicit sexual material. Many of our constituents have told us, particularly in recent months, that they feel unsafe allowing their children and grandchildren to visit the public library when they are not present, because of the content found in books that are available and sometimes even promoted by the libraries. Both public and school libraries currently allow highly inappropriate books to be read by children, frequently under the guise of educational purposes. Appendix A shows examples of current books from multiple public libraries around our state, the intended audience for each (children and young adults), and descriptions of why each is often banned, per the American Library Association.

We obtained a number of the books found in North Dakota libraries which have been identified as potentially obscene and showed them to willing constituents, both more liberal and conservative. Most responded with disbelief and shock, and even the more "progressive" among them still expressed significant concern. While this was certainly not a formal study, the informal polling of these individuals and families strongly indicates an undeniable desire to keep these books out of children's hands.

Until now, libraries have been permitted to push the boundaries further and further regarding what is shown to our children, and not surprisingly, the situation has continued to deteriorate. However, this bill would make them accountable to ensure no books in our North Dakota libraries violate our obscenity laws.

Counter to what some may claim, SB 2360 is not out to stifle creativity, artistic expression, or academic research. It specifically exempts organizations such as colleges, universities, museums, and art galleries from the requirements found in the bill. This bill is not about stifling expression or thought, but instead, has everything to do with protecting children from having their innocence stolen from them by age-inappropriate materials.

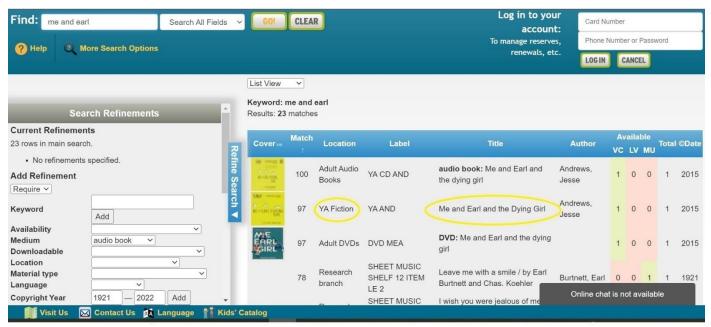
We understand that our world today is a complex and sometimes confusing place for children as they try to understand social constructs such as gender identity, or scientific facts about subjects such as biological reproduction, puberty, and STIs/STDs. They need to learn about these things to function in our society – shielding them is not an option. However, Senate Bill 2360 would ensure that they are introduced to these concepts honestly and appropriately when their parents decide it is time. Further, we like that the bill focuses on public libraries, allows for legal action to be taken against individuals (not just organizations) violating the law, and contains an extensive definition of "explicit sexual material".

North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action wholeheartedly agrees with what this bill seeks to do – protect our children. As a result, we ask that you render a "DO PASS" on Senate Bill 2360. Thank you for taking the time to read our testimony and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

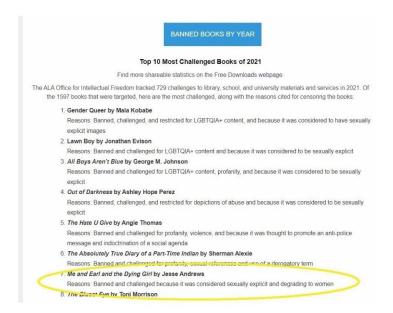
Sincerely,

Mark Jorritsma
Executive Director

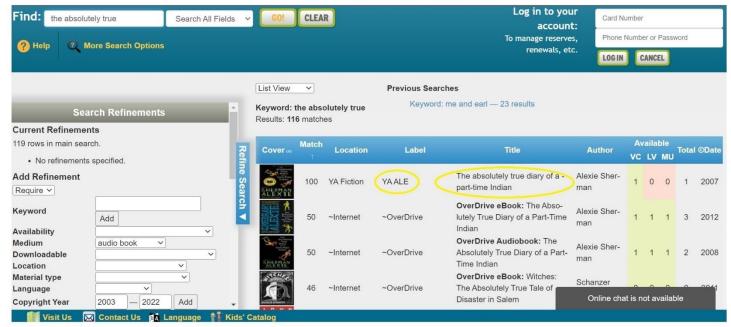
Appendix A



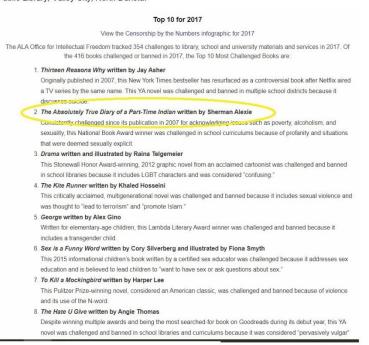
Source: Valley City Barnes County Public Library, Valley City, North Dakota.



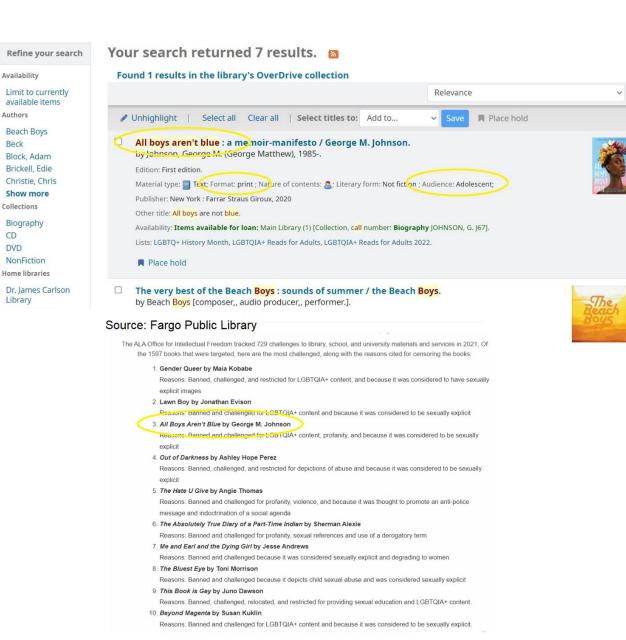
Source: American Library Association



Source: Valley City Barnes County Public Library, Valley City, North Dakota.



Source: American Library Association



Source: American Library Association

Availability

Authors

Beck

Beach Boys

Show more

Biography

Collections

CD

DVD NonFiction

Library



STEE GIND



2015

2. George

by Gino, Alex, author,

Call Number: PZ7.1.G576 Geo 2015

Summary: "When people look at George, they think they see a boy. But she knows she's not a boy. She knows she's a girl. George thinks she'll have to keep this a secret forever. Then her teacher announces that their class play is going to be Charlotte's Web. George really, really, REALLY wants to play Charlotte. But the teacher says she can't even try out for the part ... because she's a boy. With the help of her best friend, Kelly, George comes up with a plan. Not just so she can be Charlotte—but so everyone can know who she is, once and for all"— Provided by publisher.

FULL DISPLAY

PLACE REQUEST

Add to My List

Web Site. 🚰 - Alex Gino blog Target Audience Note: Grades 3-7.

Source: OCLC WorldCat

Source: Grand Forks Public Library

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Top 11 Most Challenged Books of 2018

View the Censorship by the Numbers infographic for 2018

The ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom tracked 347 challenges to library, school and university materials and services in 2018. Of the 483 books challenged or banned in 2018, the Top 11 Most Challenged Books are:

1. George by Alex Gino

Reasons: banned, challengod, and relocated because it was believed to encourage children to clear browser history and change their bodies using hormones, and for mentioning "dirty magazines," describing male anatomy, "creating confusion," and including a transgender character

2. A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo by Jill Twiss, illustrated by EG Keller

Reasons: banned and challenged for including LGBTQIA+ content, and for political and religious viewpoints

3. Captain Underpants series written and illustrated by Dav Pilkey

Reasons: series was challenged because it was perceived as encouraging disruptive behavior, while Captain Underpants and the Sensational Saga of Sir Stinks-A-Lot was challenged for including a same-sex couple

4. The Hate U Give by Angle Thomas

Reasons: banned and challenged because it was deemed "anti-cop," and for profanity, drug use, and sexual references

5. Drama written and illustrated by Raina Telgemeier

Reasons: banned and challenged for including LGBTQIA+ characters and themes

6. Thirteen Reasons Why by Jay Asher

Reasons: banned, challenged, and restricted for addressing teen suicide

7. This One Summer by Mariko Tamaki, illustrated by Jillian Tamaki

Source: American Library Association