

Chairman Klemin and members of the House Judiciary, thank you for your time today and allowing me to speak. For the record, my name is Autumn Richard and I'm from Lefor, North Dakota and I am here to speak in favor of Senate Bill 2360.

Many people here know who I am; I have been actively working to make our libraries a safer place for our youth. What some do not realize, is that I have a bachelor's degree in Social Work and have worked with children at risk, and this is the core reason why I stand here today and every day before. But, to be perfectly honest, it does not take a degree of any kind to see that what we are dealing with here is harmful to minors.

I became concerned, when I went to my local library and discovered books that any reasonable person would consider obscene in the children's and juveniles' sections of the library. It quickly became apparent that our local libraries were not willing to work with taxpaying citizens, and that is why we are here today, addressing the state and asking for you to protect our youth.

Bill 2360 provides clear definitions of what is considered obscene or pornographic to minors. This was lacking in law, creating a grey area and many stating that the terms pornographic and obscene are subjective. The terms pornographic and obscene should not be subjective, particularly when it comes to our youth, and I applaud this bill for providing a detailed definition.

Bill 2360 also has a preexisting penalty included (Class B Misdemeanor), so anyone that provides obscene or pornographic material to a minor should face the ramifications. Anyone. This is not targeting libraries; on the contrary, they are just included in a multitude of other businesses and entities, public or private, that would all equally face the same penalty. If Walmart cannot have these books on the shelves, why should our libraries?

You've heard about "Let's Talk About It," and "Naked, Not Your Average Sex Encyclopedia," so I won't discuss them today and be redundant. I will say, in light of recent testimony, that there has been some speculation that by removing these books, STI's will flourish at an even higher rate than today, but books such as Let's Talk About It clearly states that STI's are 'no biggie.'

So I will not be redundant but, unfortunately, there are so many books that I have entirely new quotes to read for you today.

I want to remind you that while some of these books have a recommended reading age of fourteen plus, any child of any age can read these books and are often encouraged to do so when these books are placed on displays.

Did anyone read or watch the news article about 11 year old Knox Zajac reading a book he found in his middle school library? Did it make you uncomfortable? I will read from several books today and every time that I give a recommended reading age, I want you to think of a child you know in that age range, reading this book to you. And ask yourself, are you comfortable with that?

Pink Blue and You has a reading age of 4-8. It has small children within the pages saying things like, "When I was born, I was called a girl but I feel like a boy, and, I feel like I'm both a boy and a girl at the same time."

Rupaul Charles is a board book with recommended reading age of 2-5. It states, "you're born naked and the rest is drag."

The ABC's of Equality is a board book with a recommended reading age of 1-5. This book talks about gender (being a boy or girl or either or neither), the LGBTQ community, being privileged and to "be aware of your advantages," transgender, and the pronoun Ze.

Would you, as a parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle, feel comfortable explaining terms such as drag, transgender, or pronouns to a 1 to 5 year old?

You Be You, A Kid's Guide to Gender, Sexuality and Family is for children between the ages of 7-11. This book discusses sex classifications and transgenderism without discussing the possible negative repercussions, while also informing the reader of male and white privilege.

Sex Ed is a book in my library for fourteen year olds; it states that, "the lining of the anus is quite sensitive. Some people find it pleasurable to have this area stimulated, for example, with a penis, sex toy, or fingers." It also says, "There's nothing necessarily wrong with watching porn, so long as someone is choosing to watch it freely, without any pressure and as long as the porn is legal."

Queer Ducks is a book recommended for twelve and older. This book normalizes sexual deviancy by discussing sexual tendencies in animals. A reading from the book about bonobos or monkeys on page 35, "That's when well, they started an orgy; not just two or three or four either. All of the bonobos started having sex with one another. Male with female, female with female, male with male, young and old and everything in between."

Did you imagine a child reading this to you? How did it make you feel? I ask again, what if this was your child? Is this something they should be learning at this age?

This is not an infringement of anyone's first amendment right. According to the Department of Justice, "Federal law strictly prohibits the distribution of obscene matter to minors. Any transfer or attempt to transfer such material to a minor under the age of 16 is punishable under federal law.

In addition, visual representations, such as drawings, cartoons, or paintings that appear to depict minors engaged in sexual activity and are obscene are also illegal under federal law.

It is important to note that the standard for what is harmful to minors may be different than the standard for adults, and offenders convicted of obscenity crimes involving minors face harsher penalties than if the crimes involved only adults."

Under our own governmental law, these books should have never been placed in the hands of minors, and yet here we are. Our libraries understand and acknowledge that a minor shouldn't be able to look up certain terms, such as anal sex or any other explicit on a computer, but the library doesn't seem to acknowledge that this same information found in literature should be monitored for minors. This is not about censorship; it isn't called censorship when there are protective limitations for minors on computers; this is no different.

It gives me no pleasure to read these excerpts, but if we do not place Bill 2360 into law, then we, as a state, are saying that a child of any age can read the following. I am going to read a few excerpts from the juvenile section of the Dickinson Public Library. Again, please imagine a child reading this, not me, not an adult. And I'm going to read one excerpt from a penthouse letter. There are 8 total excerpts. If you cannot find the difference between what the library thinks is acceptable and an actual quote from an authentic pornographic magazine, then I think the answer is clear that Senate Bill 2360 needs to pass today.

- 1) "I was using my right hand to stroked my penis while my left hand pressed against the wall of the very small shower to steady myself because my legs didn't feel very sturdy and I had never masturbated standing up before."
- 2) "I breathe out as he touches my breasts, first with his hands and then with his mouth. I lie back and his hands move to my thighs, to the hem of my dress and then under it. He bends his head to kiss between my legs."
- 3) "He bends me over the bed and drizzles some lube on my ass. I made him wear a condom, of course. And he starts pushing it in and wow that hurts. Eventually he finishes, and pulls out, and the condom, of course, is covered in shit."
- 4) "She pushes me back on the bed and we start kissing again and when her hand moves between my legs, I don't stop her."
- 5) "At least you fucked a straight guy in the ass until he came. That's got to be an accomplishment, right?"
- 6) "Then he placed me over the seat on my stomach. I felt him lift the back of my skirt over my buttocks. I felt so dirty this way and I loved it."
- 7) "His hand comes over me, between us and through my track pants it seems so innocent and so dirty."
- 8) "I'd sucked my share of dicks and had gotten plenty of blowjobs, handjobs, every other kind of job, but the only buttsex I'd had was with this junior who was in love with my cock."

I implore you to see the necessity of this bill and respectfully ask that you vote this bill in today, as is. This concludes my testimony and I am happy to stand for any questions. Thank you.

*References for the excerpts: *Autoboyography*, by Christian Lauren

Little & Lion, by Brandy Colbert

The Nerdy & the Dirty, by B.T. Gottfred

Jack of Hearts, by L.C. Rosen