



**TESTIMONY ON SB2360  
HOUSE JUDICIAL COMMITTEE  
03/14/2023**

**By: Mary J. Soucie, State Librarian  
North Dakota State Library**

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Chairman Larson and members of the Senate Judicial committee,

For the record, I am State Librarian Mary Soucie, and I am providing information on SB2360. The definition of a public library in SB2360 is a “library containing collections of books or periodicals for the general population to read, borrow, or refer to which is supported with funds derived from taxation.” The State Library provides materials to any resident of North Dakota from our collection, North Dakota libraries and out-of-state libraries through InterLibrary Loan (ILL). The ILL service is facilitated statewide for libraries and individual patrons.

The State Library has conducted research on the average reading speed, the average length of both fiction and non-fiction books, and the average time it takes to read a book. Our research shows that the average adult reads 200-300 WPM. The average number of pages in a fiction book is 200-400 and a nonfiction book is 150-200.

The State Library’s physical collection includes just over 89,000 fiction items. We have computed that we would need 72 employees based on a 40-hour workweek to review our fiction collection by the 2024 deadline in the bill.

The shared e-book collection that NDSL participates in with the public libraries has 8,713 items, which means an additional 34 employees would be needed to review that collection.

The State Library administers the annual Public Libraries Survey in partnership with the Institute for Museum and Library Services. The most recent data available is from 2021. The public libraries that completed the survey owned a collective 4,925,631 items. The number of additional staff needed at the public libraries would vary greatly for each library depending on the size of their collection and the number of items in the children’s, young adult, and adult collections. The average reading speed for grades 1-6 is 80-185 words per minute. The average teen reading speed is 195-204 words per minute.

As mentioned above, NDSL facilitates the statewide ILL program. We receive hold requests for materials by libraries on behalf of their local patrons or from individuals. If we are unable to fill the hold in-state, we request the item from an out-of-state library. We access collections at thousands of public, academic, school and special libraries from across the country utilizing a tool called First Search. Many of our public libraries do not have access to the tool which is why NDSL facilitates those requests. NDSL

	# of Temporary Employees	Monthly Rate including fringe benefits	Monthly Fiscal Impact	Annual Fiscal Impact
NDSL	71	2,647.70	187,986.70	2,255,840.40
E-books	35	2,647.70	92,669.50	1,112,034.00
Total	106	2,647.70	187,986.70	3,367,874.40

\*Rate is based on NDSL paraprofessionals