

February 13, 2023

Re: Senate Bill 2360--A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact section 12.1-27.1-03.1 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to displaying objectionable materials or performance to minors; and to provide a penalty.

To The Committee Chair:

I am writing in support of SB 2360 as a concerned citizen of North Dakota. I also have 25 years of experience working in a national non-profit agency dedicated to the support and care of children, adolescents, and their families.

During my career, I either made or assisted with thousands of mandated child abuse and neglect reports to state authorities. I have witnessed first-hand the lifetime of damage that occurs when a child is abused or neglected.

Allowing children to be exposed to sexually explicit material is clearly child abuse and neglect. From the North Dakota Century Code:

14-09-22.1. Neglect of child - Penalty. A parent, adult family or household member, guardian, or other custodian of any child, who willfully commits any of the following offenses is guilty of a class C felony: 1. Fails to provide proper parental care or control, subsistence, education as required by law, or other care or control necessary for the child's physical, mental, or emotional health, or morals.

If anyone is unsure of the emotional damage caused when children are exposed to sexually explicit material in our libraries or squeamish about considering this issue on moral grounds, then consider the science. With the ongoing research in the functioning of the human brain and learning, we have mountains of evidence debunking Alfred Kinsey's research that has driven and continues to drive so much of our educational and societal thinking and practice in the area of sexual behavior.

We are not talking about banning books. There are a multitude of opportunities to partake in sexually explicit information. We are talking about trying to protect our children and the next generation.

I think the question we must ask is do we want our libraries to be safe places for growth and development or do we want them to continue to be places we send our children to be abused?

Sincerely,

David Reed
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