

Thank you, Madame Chair and members of the committee for the opportunity to provide testimony for SB 2360. I am writing in favor of SB 2360 today. I am Ruth Heley, a resident of Dickinson, ND since 1995. I was a private and college instructor of vocal music for 22 years. I home school one teenaged son. I tell you this because I have spent much of my life having the privilege of teaching and mentoring young people. Their needs are close to my heart. Educator of politics and author, Richard J. Maybury, tells us that Natural Law means to “do all that you have agreed to do and do not encroach on other persons or their property”. Groups of people have chosen to encroach upon the minors of our state by placing sexually explicit books or books with gender ideologies in our public and school libraries. These materials are directly harmful to the developing brains and healthy maturation of our children.

Why do we need this bill? Our minor children depend on adults to provide an environment in which they may learn how to reason and acquire an education in core subjects. Sometimes our schools have become a place of social experimentation. We need to tighten the focus of our schools, emphasizing again such academic subjects as have served humanity for thousands of years. Parents have the right to introduce sexual information, which is vital to a child’s development, at a time that is best for that child’s age and maturity. They can also best communicate family beliefs and morals around such important information. Some may argue that not all parents choose to educate their child in this area. We need to enable parents to do this, not replace them. The materials the public libraries are currently providing are often recommended by the American Library Association which has a clear agenda for how it wants to educate our children. ALA (2010) policy...states that, “The American Library Association stringently and unequivocally maintains that libraries and librarians have an obligation to resist efforts that systematically exclude materials dealing with any subject matter, including sex, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.” Why are we allowing agenda-driven out-of-state entities to determine our children’s sexual development?

What are the positives of this bill? This bill takes a multipronged approach to ensuring the safety of a number of mediums our children use for enrichment and education. It addresses digital safety from sexually explicit materials. This harmonizes with the Federal Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). It sets standards for public performances as well as written materials. It has allowed exclusions for fine art found in museums or galleries, while also allowing exclusions for universities and colleges. It defines the visual criteria for explicit material thoroughly.

What this bill is not: Some fear that removing or limiting use of these sexually explicit books in question will eliminate valuable educational materials. These materials have an agenda to encourage sexual promiscuity, experimentation and questioning of gender identity. The book, *Let’s Talk About It*, has upwards of ten or more images of sexual copulation or masturbation, for example. In addition, the text, directed at tweens and teens, contains extensive chapters which encourage sexting and pornography use as well as affirmation of all gender identities with disregard to biological sex of the individual. The figures drawn are very androgenous or conflicting in sexual parts.

Some claim that limiting use of these materials in this way is “book banning” or “censorship”. This bill does not prevent the sale of such items from certain stores or the internet. It does not prevent the writing or publishing of such materials. Perhaps we have forgotten what government censorship has looked like in the past. From the Holocaust Museum they write, “Examples of censorship under the Nazis included: closing down or taking over anti-Nazi newspapers; controlling what news appeared in newspapers, on the radio, and in newsreels; banning and burning books that the Nazis categorized as un-German; controlling what soldiers wrote home during World War II.” In another example, British historian David King wrote, “The physical eradication of Stalin's political opponents was followed by their obliteration from all forms of pictorial existence.” This bill is focused on protecting our minor children with similar commonsense measures which have already been used for a number of years with radio, broadcast television, movie ratings and sales of wrapped pornographic materials in convenience stores and similar locations. I ask this committee to make a “Do Pass” determination.