

Mariah Bates

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Senate Bill 2360

Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My Name is Mariah Bates and I reside in District #1. I am asking that you please render a DO PASS recommendation on Senate Bill 2360.

There is so much that can be said relating to the need of this bill. Data that supports the need for this bill. Personal experiences that prove the need for this bill. I know there will be testimonies shared today that will speak from those standpoints and I know that I myself have the research to do so as well. But, today, I want to offer a viewpoint, my viewpoint, from my initial encounter with the obscene books offered in my community and in many communities across our nation by Public school districts.

I am often a very black and white person. Although some may dislike a viewpoint such as this it has served me well in my life and continues to help me build a strong foundation of my moral and ethical beliefs. When I found out that there were sexually explicit books being provided by our Public School District to the children in our community, I couldn't not truly comprehend the idea. Not only does this not sit well with my mind but it does not sit well with my soul. When you scrape away the extra words surrounding this topic, and look at the statement for what it truly is "Adults providing access to sexually explicit books to minors" you can not tell me that it sits right with you either.

I had never truly been so infuriated and dumbfounded than the day I was met with opposition to this statement. When meeting with the Superintendent and School Board president about the available obscene books in my district we were met with the statements that children have freedom of choice and parents have parental choice. I find this statement so foolish. Children do not have freedom of choice as children. We do not allow them to purchase or consume alcohol, to purchase and consume tobacco, to attend rated R movies, or even to purchase pornography. But yet a public school district should be allowed to provide children access to unrated, unregulated books that glorify sexually explicit interactions, alcohol, drug use, and suicide. Again, this is a black and white situation for me, I can not possibly see the good in it. In regards to parental choice, I believe that if a parent truly wants their child exposed to such harmful material at a young age than they can do so with their own money and purchase these books for their home. Parents lose their parental choice when a book is already freely available to their child in a public school library where a parent may never know if their child is reading it or not.

North Dakotas tagline is to be Legendary. The “Be Legendary brand” celebrates the land, the legends, the adventurous spirit, the vibrant communities, the scenic places and the genuine people of North Dakota. Let us remember that when we are reviewing this Bill. Let us continue to be Legendary in the United States by not standing by, let us take a stand against the books that are being fought across our country. Let us honor our North Dakota communities filled with people who want to protect their children. I ask you again to please render a Do Pass for Senate Bill 2360 to help parents protect their children.