

January 26, 2025

To Representative Warrey and the other members of the House Committee of Industry, Business and Labor,

My name is Rachel Waldo, and I am a Teen and Young Adult Services Librarian in the state of North Dakota. I am writing to you today to urge your firm opposition to House Bill No. 1141.

As a librarian in North Dakota, I have been privileged with the opportunity to join the professional organization of the North Dakota Library Association. This has been a game-changer for me in my career in the field of librarianship. The digital committee meetings and annual conference provide amazing opportunities to network, share tips, and refocus on what really matters as a librarian: your patrons.

HB 1141 would make it so my employer could not pay for this amazing opportunity I didn't even know existed. I don't know if I would have prioritized joining a professional organization when I first became a librarian. I wouldn't have known the opportunities I was giving up. This is the case for many young professionals across North Dakota, beyond just the field of librarianship.

Finally, I urge you to consider the harm this has on professional organizations. From those who can't afford membership in organizations they'd like to be a part of, to those who don't know the organization's value, membership in these organizations will be hurt. This is especially problematic in a state as spread out as we are here in rural North Dakota.

I ask you, why is this necessary? Don't we want those most qualified to weigh in on their profession to provide testimony to lawmakers when they are debating bills which would affect them? When debating libraries, does it not behove you to ask a librarian? What better than a focus group of local librarians that can speak with one voice to more concisely give testimony on politically relevant topics?

I thank you all for considering my testimony, and I strongly urge you to oppose HB 1141 for the sake of all of the young professionals of North Dakota.

Sincerely,

Rachel Waldo