

Chairwoman Larson and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Chelsea Sorenson, and I am a born and raised North Dakota resident, the proud daughter of a librarian, and lifelong avid reader. I am writing to you in opposition of SB 2307.

SB 2307 is an attack on libraries, free speech, and local control. This bill is redundant— North Dakota already has laws preventing obscene materials from being available to minors. It is harmful, placing libraries and educators under vague, politically motivated scrutiny. And it is dangerous, setting a precedent for government overreach into intellectual freedom.

1. It undermines the First Amendment by allowing book bans based on ideology, rather than legal standards.
2. It introduces vague and subjective criteria for what is considered “harmful,” leading to confusion and legal risks.
3. It takes decision-making power out of the hands of parents, librarians, and local communities and hands it to the government.
4. It unfairly punishes librarians and teachers, who could face career consequences for simply doing their jobs.
5. It threatens access to digital resources, potentially blocking ebooks and audiobooks that many North Dakotans, including rural and disabled residents, such as myself, rely on.

Libraries are NOT distributing pornography to children. This is a manufactured moral panic and outright lie designed to justify censorship. If the real concern were child safety, lawmakers would focus on internet safety education, social media regulation, and preventing real exploitation— not banning books.

As the daughter of a librarian who spent her career defending the First Amendment right to read, I know firsthand how vital libraries are to education and personal growth. My father still reads to my disabled twin sister via Skype every night. Books are more than entertainment and enrichment— they are lifelines. Public and school libraries are sometimes children’s only access to books at all. No government should have the power to decide what my family or anyone else can read.

History has shown us that the illiterate, poor, and the uneducated are easier to control. Where would infamous historical figures like Alexander Hamilton, Frederick Douglass, Theodore Roosevelt, Mary Shelley, Albert Einstein, and more have gotten in life and what changes would they have brought to history and the world, if they did not learn how or teach themselves how to read?

North Dakota has already addressed this issue in 2023 with House Bill 1205, which strengthened obscenity laws. Why are we wasting limited session time and taxpayers’ dollars on yet another attempt to police books instead of solving real problems? This is NOT about protecting children— it’s about controlling what people can read, nothing more. The issue needs to be put to rest.

I urge you to oppose this bill and not cost taxpayers and librarians undue burdens and not drive down library usage.

Thank you,

Chelsea Sorenson
Bismarck, ND