

Subject: Opposition to SB 2307 - Protecting Access to Information and Freedom of Expression

Dear [Recipient's Name],

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 2307, which proposes amendments to the North Dakota Century Code concerning public libraries and the regulation of materials deemed obscene or harmful to minors.

While I understand the intent to protect minors from explicit content, SB 2307 raises significant concerns regarding censorship, access to information, and the role of public libraries. Here are my key points of opposition:

1. **Censorship and Freedom of Expression:** SB 2307 imposes broad and subjective criteria for what constitutes "obscene material" and "obscene performance." This could lead to the unwarranted removal of valuable literary, artistic, and educational materials from public libraries, infringing on the freedom of expression guaranteed by the First Amendment.
2. **Impact on Public Libraries:** The bill mandates stringent safety policies and technology protection measures that could place an undue burden on public libraries. These institutions are already operating with limited resources, and additional regulations could hinder their ability to serve the community effectively.
3. **Subjectivity and Enforcement:** The definitions provided in SB 2307 are highly subjective and open to interpretation. This ambiguity could result in inconsistent enforcement and potential legal challenges, diverting attention and resources away from more pressing community needs.
4. **Educational and Developmental Value:** Many materials that might be deemed "obscene" under this bill have significant educational and developmental value. Restricting access to such materials could impede the intellectual and emotional growth of young readers, who benefit from exposure to diverse perspectives and ideas.
5. **Community Trust and Autonomy:** Public libraries are trusted community institutions that should have the autonomy to curate their collections based on the needs and values of their patrons. SB 2307 undermines this trust by imposing external controls that may not align with the community's interests.

I urge you to reconsider the implications of SB 2307 and to prioritize the protection of intellectual freedom and access to information. Public libraries play a crucial role in fostering a well-informed and educated society, and it is essential to support their mission rather than impose restrictive measures.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Laura Hagan