

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO SB 2307

House Judiciary Committee

Date of Hearing: March 18, 2025 9:00 a.m.

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This written testimony is presented in opposition to SB 2307, which would lead to the censoring of books and criminalizes librarians.

This bill relates to the sections of the North Dakota Century Code devoted to obscenity, including protecting minor children from pornography. We can all agree that this is important. However, this bill goes beyond that ideal.

Public libraries are one of the only places where anyone can freely find information. Libraries are a safe haven for people to learn and should not be a place where political rhetoric and ideals determine available information. Libraries are places where families can spend time together. Trust librarians and schools to professionally manage their book collections.

Libraries have policies in place regarding materials available for the public. For example, my local library has a policy on "Collection Management" which considers the developmental and information needs of children and teens.¹ This policy includes a right of the public to object to materials and a process for resolving those objections. It also places the responsibility for determining if a book is appropriate on the parents of the child, where it should rightly land.

This bill opens up the door to censorship by prohibiting information in schools or public libraries relating to sexual materials. How does this affect the topics of health and sex ed, which are taught in public school? Similarly, how does it affect books and art which are included in libraries, (i.e., Michaelangelo, David, the Sistene Chapel, Rembrandt, and Botticelli)?

I also see issues of how a library would comply with the requirements of having certain books in an area not easily accessible by minors and monitoring of digital resources. Please rely on local libraries' testimony on whether this is possible, however, my experience is that many small libraries do not have the space or resources to comply with these requirements.

The government should not be in the business in blocking access to information, limiting free speech, limiting lawful artistic portrayals, censoring books, or criminalizing librarians.

Please oppose SB2307.



¹ Minot Public Library Collection Management Policy (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bTNz6hewKtAtRzU-DeD2flgqYJFH5QUP/view>)