

House Judiciary Committee
March 17, 2025
SB 2307 - Testimony in Opposition

Chair Klemin and members of the House Judiciary Committee, my name is Kate Bladow, and I am writing in opposition to Senate Bill 2307. As an adult, I oppose this bill because it will limit my access to health resources at public libraries.

In 2024, I read a book that many would consider inappropriate for minors and some would consider sexually explicit: *Vagina Obscura* by Rachel E Gross. This book is about the science behind women's reproductive health. From the book description on the publisher's website (<https://wwnorton.com/books/vagina-obscura>):

A camera obscura reflects the world back but dimmer and inverted. Similarly, science has long viewed woman through a warped lens, one focused narrowly on her capacity for reproduction. As a result, there exists a vast knowledge gap when it comes to what we know about half of the bodies on the planet.

That is finally changing. Today, a new generation of researchers is turning its gaze to the organs traditionally bound up in baby-making—the uterus, ovaries, and vagina—and illuminating them as part of a dynamic, resilient, and ever-changing whole. Welcome to *Vagina Obscura*, an odyssey into a woman's body from a fresh perspective, ushering in a whole new cast of characters.

I am a woman and have a uterus, ovaries and vagina. To care for my body and provide informed consent for medical procedures, I need access to this type of information. Also, I find the history of research into women's health fascinating.

That said, it is quite possible that this could be a book that “the average person, applying contemporary North Dakota standards, would find predominantly appeals to a prurient interest” due to the scientific descriptions of female genitalia and the recounting of procedural advances on genital reconstruction. Because of this, a single individual complaint could require that this book be removed to an area in the library where I would need to provide ID to enter so it isn't available to minors.

Because I am most comfortable reading with an e-reader, like a Kindle, or listening to audiobooks while performing chores or engaging in hobbies, *Vagina Obscura* was accessed through Libby, the ebook and audiobook platform offered by many libraries across North Dakota and the United States. Based on the language in SB 2307, this would no longer be allowed: “A public library or a school district may not maintain in an area easily accessible to minors explicit sexual material.” Libby would be an area easily accessible to minors, but it currently does not appear to have the functionality necessary to limit content based on the age of the patron.

As written, this bill infringes on the freedom of adults to gain knowledge and information and supports censorship. I urge you to give Senate Bill 2307 a Do Not Pass recommendation.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony.