

Olivia Data
Testimony in Opposition to SB 2307
February 10, 2025

Greetings, Chairwoman Klemin and members of the committee.

My name is Olivia Data, and I am a North Dakota resident writing to you to urge you to oppose SB 2307.

The world we live in is becoming increasingly confusing, fast-paced, and polarized. With today's technological developments, youth have access to all sorts of harmful information directly at our fingertips. Our response to this reality must not be to limit access to education but to enable the youth of North Dakota to seek out truth in a safe and healthy manner.

Censoring and defunding public libraries will not protect anyone. Rather, it will take away one of the last remaining community spaces we have where young people are free to ask questions without shame or fear and find answers that are accurate and conducive to growth. Of course it is inappropriate to encourage that explicitly sexual material be pushed into the hands of children. But should our libraries be limited in their abilities to provide knowledge, youth will only be pushed further towards misleading sources like the internet.

Furthermore, SB 2307 presents a great danger in that what we consider "obscene material" – even in relation to the "average person" – is highly subjective. The bible, for example, a holy book and a source of learning for countless generations, contains descriptions of nudity and adult topics that many people would consider inappropriate for young children. Will we ban all depictions of the human body? Will we shame members of our own community for exploring the definitions of art and literature? And who gets to decide what has "serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value"? If we want to promote the welfare of our youth, surely this decision should be left up to parents rather than our government and its money.

We all deserve to be able to learn and grow in a safe and healthy environment. If we want to have any hope of preserving any places of knowledge, education, and community for future generations, we must stop censoring our libraries. Please, help us build a world where youth are empowered, supported, and excited about learning. I urge you to vote "Do Not Pass" on SB 2307.

Thank you for your time in reviewing this testimony.

Sincerely,

Olivia Data
District 35
Bismarck, ND