

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Alex Johnson, and I am a board member for the Williston Community Library, as well as the owner of Guided By Spirit Publishing. I am here today to express my strong opposition to SB 2307. As an avid reader, publisher, and lifelong advocate for education, I find this bill to be not only unnecessary but actively harmful to the intellectual and cultural growth of our communities.

SB 2307 represents an alarming attempt to censor knowledge, restrict access to diverse perspectives, and undermine the very foundation of libraries and educational institutions. The role of libraries is to provide open access to information and to allow individuals the freedom to explore, learn, and think critically. This bill does the opposite. It places limitations on what can be read, learned, and shared.

History has shown that restricting access to books and ideas does not protect society. It weakens it. Censorship stifles curiosity, suppresses creativity, and creates an environment of fear rather than understanding. Libraries are meant to be safe havens for exploration and discovery, not battlegrounds for political and ideological control.

The books that this bill seeks to remove or restrict are often those that challenge individuals to think beyond their own experiences and provide representation for communities that have long been marginalized. Education should never be dictated by fear, but rather by the pursuit of knowledge. It is not the job of legislators to decide what is or isn't appropriate for every reader; that is the role of parents, educators, and individuals themselves.

SB 2307 is not about protecting our communities. It is about control. If we begin down this path of book bans and censorship, where does it end? Do we erase history because it is uncomfortable? Do we silence voices because they offer a different perspective? This bill sends a dangerous message that some knowledge is too dangerous to access, which is the very antithesis of what education stands for.

I urge you to vote NO on SB 2307 and stand in defense of intellectual freedom, the right to read, and the fundamental values of education. Let us trust our communities, our educators, and our librarians to do their jobs without government overreach.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Alex Johnson  
Board Member, Williston Community Library  
Owner, Guided By Spirit Publishing