

## **Testimony in Opposition to North Dakota Senate Bill 2307**

Chairperson and members of the committee,

My name is Luke Hurt. I am a member of the Dickinson Area Public Library Board of Directors, and I submit this testimony in firm opposition to Senate Bill 2307, which, despite its stated intent to protect minors, represents unnecessary government overreach into local decision-making and personal responsibility. This bill threatens foundational American principles of limited government, individual liberties, and parental rights while imposing bureaucratic burdens on libraries and state officials.

### **Government Overreach and Parental Rights**

SB 2307 undermines the authority of parents to make decisions about what their children read and learn. It assumes that the government, rather than families, knows best when it comes to what young people should have access to in libraries. Parents—not bureaucrats—should have the final say in their children's education and reading materials. Local control and parental choice must be preserved, rather than replaced with broad, state-mandated censorship.

### **Unnecessary Burdens on Local Institutions**

Public and school libraries are already managed by trained professionals who ensure that collections reflect the needs and values of their communities. SB 2307 would impose vague, one-size-fits-all mandates that disregard the discretion of local librarians and educators. Furthermore, the requirement for "compliance reviews" by a state's attorney is an excessive use of government resources, adding red tape and unnecessary legal scrutiny to institutions that are already accountable to their local communities.

### **Proven Success of HB 1205**

North Dakota has already taken steps to address concerns regarding library content through the successful implementation of HB 1205. Since its enactment, new policies have been created at the Dickinson Area Public Library (DAPL) that align with existing law, ensuring appropriate library governance without excessive interference. Notably, since these policies have been in place, DAPL has not received any requests for reconsideration regarding library materials. This demonstrates that current legislation is already effectively addressing concerns without the need for additional government overreach.

### **A Slippery Slope Toward Ideological Censorship**

Throughout history, government interference in book selection has led to the suppression of diverse perspectives, including works of historical, literary, and educational value. While it is reasonable to ensure age-appropriate materials, SB 2307 is written in a way that could be used to remove books on subjects deemed politically or socially unpopular by those in power. The free exchange of ideas is a fundamental American value, and we should be wary of any law that sets the precedent for increased government control over information.

## **Preserving Constitutional Freedoms**

This bill raises serious concerns about violations of the First Amendment, which protects not just free speech but also access to information. Overly broad content restrictions could limit access to important educational materials, including works on health, history, and civics that help young people develop into informed, responsible citizens. North Dakota has always stood for protecting constitutional freedoms—SB 2307 moves in the opposite direction.

## **Conclusion**

SB 2307 is not only an unnecessary government intrusion but also a direct threat to parental rights, local governance, and the principles of free speech that have long defined our nation. Instead of allowing state-mandated censorship, we should trust parents and communities to make their own decisions. The success of HB 1205, particularly at the Dickinson Area Public Library, demonstrates that additional restrictions are unnecessary. I urge the committee to reject SB 2307 and to uphold the values of limited government, personal responsibility, and individual freedom.

Thank you for your time and consideration.