

SB 2307

I am writing to ask you to vote in opposition of the SB 2307. This bill is a censorship bill that does not allow libraries to do what they are supposed to do. We are to supply materials to all our community without subjecting our personal opinions on what the public wants to read about and we are to have materials that show all the sides of an issue. This bill will prohibit libraries from following the very bylaws that they were created upon. I have included the material selection policy from our bylaws as well as the form that is required if someone has a complaint to material on the shelf. This process has always worked and does not need to have further review by the state's attorney or the legislative council if people are not happy about the outcome. Everyone does not always get their way.

It is the parents' responsibility to know what their children are looking at or checking out. Just as it is a parent's responsibility to know what the children are looking at on their smart phones. Are you going to go after the internet next to pass laws that this same type of material cannot be posted on the internet? Access to this type of material is blocked on the computers in my library. Are you going to go after TV stations that allow commercials with nudity (as defined in this bill) on them? Why are you only going after libraries and making our jobs punishable with jail time? The class B misdemeanor is still in the bill, it was just left off the amended version.

If this law passes it not only goes after ONE book in particular but entire genres. The entire romance section in the library would have to be inaccessible to minors.

Books that would have to come off our shelves because it states in our bylaws (15.2.9) that we will not have a closed shelf collection, would include the dictionary, the bible – including the bible for teens – all romance novels, inspirational fiction novels, western novels, breast feeding books, midwifery books and any other non-fiction books that talk about the human body. This is way more far reaching and more work than what has been researched before the bill was introduced. Who is going to make the judgement of what books have to be locked up?

Our library has a very difficult time getting teens between the ages of 13-18 in the library. They have their phones to look everything up on, they do not come into the library until after they are out of high school as it is not a "cool" thing to do. The games they play on the internet are far more graphic than books that are in our library. Are you going to pass laws to keep the teens from accessing those games?

Tax payers of Mercer County will be very upset with myself and my staff if we are sitting at the desk reading every new book that comes into the library for patron checkout to be sure that none of the items listed in this bill are in those books, we have a very short description of the book to go off of when we order books. Once the book is here and being cataloged is when we know what all may or may not be in the book without reading the book in its entirety I would not know if there was any kind of sex, gender identity or anything else prohibited in this bill in these new books. It could be something very subtle in the book but yet then it would be prohibited from going on the shelf. It needs to be left up to the patrons and parents what they want to read and what they want their children reading. What offends one person may not offend another.