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I am testifying in opposition to SB2278.

First, there is certainly value in retaining original texts in university libraries. This is especially true for classics and texts with ongoing historical value. That said, I don't think it is necessary to mandate that the State Library and all university libraries retain all copies of the original versions of all altered texts.

Library collections are always growing and changing, and there is only so much room in any one library. Librarians already make informed choices about what books they purchase and retain. Sometimes, space considerations make these choices very difficult, but librarians are trained to make them. I think that the preservation of original texts should be and will be a factor university librarians consider when deciding whether or not to retain particular books, but I question mandating that libraries keep any particular book because such a strict requirement limits their ability to keep their collections usable and current within the space limitations they each have to deal with.

What happens if a library's only original text copy of a book develops mold or an insect infestation? Do they really need to keep it if multiple other libraries have the same book with the same text that isn't in a horrible condition that threatens the books shelved near it?

As long as a few libraries keep a copy of the original version of a text, that original version is easily available to anyone who wants to read it in the state. Libraries lend each other books through the mail all the time, so a library user at one library can access materials that their home library no longer owns.

Universities also change over time, and what classes they present and what books they need to support those classes also change. If a university stops offering childhood education courses, for example, should the library be required to continue to retain the original text copies of books for children? Especially, again, if there are a number of other libraries in the state that also have those original texts?

For the most part, libraries obtain e-books through licenses with library e-book vendors. As they only control the license and don't technically own the material, libraries have limited control over e-book and can't prevent or control their alteration.

Librarians can be trusted to do their jobs. For academic librarians in universities, preserving materials for research is part of their jobs. I accessed outdated but historically significant children's books for a university class project at a North Dakota university in the past, and I just checked their catalog, and they still have those outdated books, so I think I can safely say that they're already doing it. I don't think this is something the legislature needs to be involved in.

Unless all or even most libraries in the country are closed or forced to get rid of their print collections, I don't think there is any real danger of losing the original text versions of any classics of literature or significant works. Library censorship rules apply to any books that a library has that someone objects to solely due to content. A library might purchase an altered text to supply a demand for such texts, but they shouldn't get rid of the original simply because it offends people. They might get rid of the original for another reason, however, like because there is no longer a demand for it (no one checks it out) or it develops mold. I don't see the complete lack of demand for the original texts of any classics or significant works happening anytime soon, and even if it does, a university library has less stringent demand requirements than a public or school library does, so such works will be preserved by university libraries anyway, without the need for legislation that requires it.