

I am a current High School Librarian raised in North Dakota wholly opposed to SB2307. My former students in Durham, NC and current students in Spencerport, NY are always completely amazed that I grew up across the street from the Heart of America Library in Rugby, ND, but I only had access to a McDonald's hamburger when we would take the 67 mile trip to Minot. The librarians at the Heart of America Library definitely knew me by name, and I grew up thinking that all of the books on display they had selected just for me. I remember the day when I had finally exhausted the collection there. I was just in fourth grade, but I had read nearly every title in the entire children's section. The librarians noticed my frustration and saw me nearly walk out the door empty-handed. They stopped me and asked me what was wrong. When I shared my truth, they said perhaps it was time that I explored what was available on the other side (the adult side). I was a bit overwhelmed and returned home without much luck. When I returned home, my mom called to talk to the librarians and ask for additional assistance in helping me with this transition. Not a lot of ten year olds can read at an adult level and exhaust an entire children's section by age ten. When I returned the next day, the librarians were ready for me. They showed me authors that might interest me and what kinds of covers to look for. I quickly inhaled most of what Bethany House Publishers had put out at that time and now love recommending Janette Oke to my students looking for Christian romance. I enjoyed some Agatha Christie, John Steinbeck, and yes, even a Stephen King or two long before I could possibly understand and fully comprehend everything that was going on. There was no limit put on my reading at The Heart of America Library, but there was at the schools I attended. I read at an adult level, but was only allowed to select books for my grade level. Imagine reading *Of Mice and Men* at home and then being told to stick to *The Boxcar Children* at school. Many of our children in North Dakota live in true book deserts. They only have access to what we make available to them in our school and public libraries, yet most of them have no filtering software on their phones, tablets, or home computers. I understand a parent knows their child best and parents certainly should be talking with their children about ALL of their media choices. Parents do NOT understand ALL children best. Our librarians are the experts in books, literature, and information. They know and understand their audiences and their needs. I read between 75 and 500 books a year (depending on which grade and content level I am working with in the given year). I understand how books are published, I understand the Miller Test, and I understand the difference between chronological age and developmental stage. I trust the librarians who raised me in North Dakota do as well. Let them continue to do their jobs and not have to deal with the unnecessary oversight proposed by SB2307. They are far more knowledgeable of what SB2307 is asking for and are already doing it.