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## **In opposition to SB 2307:**

“Don’t join the book burners. Don’t think you are going to conceal faults by concealing the evidence that they ever existed. Don’t be afraid to go into your library and read *every* book.” - U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower (Rep.)

My name is Erin Saldarini and I have written this letter to convey my opposition to SB 2307. This bill is not only an attack on education and free thinking, but it puts in great jeopardy one of the most important and oft underfunded resources in communities: libraries. While I can appreciate that well-educated and free thinking individuals are threatening to politicians- argue to the contrary though they may, historically there is no better catalyst for societal progress and evolution. I do not believe anyone could argue against the fact that we need to continue to move forward as a society.

Now more than ever, we need to be encouraging education and literacy. Banning or restricting access to books is an affront to the First Amendment and its protections held up by the U.S. Supreme Court. Self-expression is an important milestone in the development of children and teens, and it comes from learning about multiple viewpoints and challenging traditional ways of thinking. Censoring books discourages individuals from thinking critically and freely- robbing young minds of the well-rounded learning they deserve.

Logistically and fiscally speaking, demanding that libraries dedicate what would wind up being a very large portion of their already meager budgets to designing “restricted areas” for said “reasonable person’s” designated “lewd and obscene” literature, would be a nightmare. Some of the most vulnerable and underserved in their communities seek refuge in their local libraries. If this bill is allowed to progress, the funding that many libraries utilize to create programs to help their local communities will be stripped away to make room for these sequestered materials. A majority of the libraries housed in larger cities would likely survive, but for those in smaller communities it would be fiscal suicide. The only other option in this scenario would be to ban minors from entering the library without a legal guardian present. I can only postulate that putting such a measure in place would drastically reduce the number of library patrons to a library, which in turn greatly reduces the amount of funding afforded said library. Therefore, this bill leaves libraries in a no-win situation.

“If this nation is to be wise as well as strong, if we are to achieve our destiny, then we need more new ideas for more wise men reading more good books in more public libraries. These libraries should be open to all- except the censor...Let us welcome controversial books and controversial authors.” - U.S. President John F. Kennedy (Dem.). Please stand with North Dakota libraries and the patrons that frequent them and oppose SB 2307.

Sincerely,  
Erin Saldarini