

North Dakota Senate Judiciary Committee
600 E Boulevard Ave.
Bismarck, ND 58505

RE: Strong Opposition to SB 2307

Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

As a dedicated member of the West Fargo Library Board, I am writing to express my unequivocal opposition to Senate Bill 2307. This bill is not only unnecessary but poses a significant threat to the fundamental mission of public libraries across North Dakota. Our libraries exist to provide free and equitable access to resources, knowledge, and opportunities that empower individuals, strengthen communities, and promote lifelong learning. SB 2307 seeks to impose undue and costly restrictions that will irreparably harm our ability to fulfill this mission.

The proposed amendments fail to mitigate the damage this bill would cause. If passed, SB 2307 would force drastic and impractical operational changes on our library, including:

- **Elimination of Student Card Partnerships:** Our successful partnership with West Fargo Public Schools, which allows students to access library resources, would be terminated, depriving thousands of children of critical learning materials.
- **Unnecessary Collection Restrictions:** The bill would require physical separation of Young Adult and Adult collections from Children's materials, leading to costly infrastructure changes and a **25% reduction in our Adult collection** to accommodate space constraints.
- **Barriers to Public Access:** The forced relocation of adult materials would necessitate **restricting elevator access**, severely impacting accessibility for elderly patrons and those with disabilities.
- **Severe Program Disruptions:** The bill would prevent youth programs from being held in designated meeting spaces, limiting educational opportunities for children and families.
- **Restroom Inaccessibility for Children:** The bill may leave children without access to a restroom when visiting the library, as the primary restrooms are located on a floor that may become restricted.
- **Financial Burden on Libraries:** Implementing age verification requirements for digital resources such as Libby and ODIN databases would impose significant financial costs, with West Fargo Public Library alone facing thousands of dollars in additional expenses.

These restrictions are not only excessive but also **entirely unnecessary**. Public libraries already have established policies and procedures for collection development and content review. Parents and guardians are responsible for guiding their children's reading choices—not the government. The attempt to legislate content access in this manner is an affront to intellectual freedom and local control.

SB 2307 does nothing to enhance public safety or protect children. Instead, it penalizes libraries, burdens taxpayers, and curtails public access to information. I urge you to reject this harmful bill and uphold the rights of North Dakotans to freely access library resources.

Sincerely,

Dr. Liann M. Hanson
West Fargo Library Board