

I write in opposition to Senate Bill no. 2307, introduced by Senators Boehm, Erbele, Hogue, and Weston.

This bill is poor legislation.

A "reasonable adult" as described in this bill should see it clearly for what it really is:

- An added burden on Library staff
- An added tool in the belt of those that wish to censor literature
- A waste of time, and therefore a waste in taxpayer money.

I take issue with the vague language of the bill.

It provides no clear actionable steps or requirements, leading to a variety of interpretations.

However, regardless of the interpretation, I oppose the idea none the less.

I have been going to the library since i learned to read. When I was a child, my mother took me every time we went to town. And as an adult, I carry on that tradition with my own child. The library is a place to be exposed to new information, new ideas, and whole new worlds within fantasy, fiction, as well as science and history.

In all my years of visiting the library, not once have i ever come across a book so obscene that i would think it appropriate to be pulled from the shelves.

Are there books I do not like, or do not agree with?

Sure there are, plenty in fact. But that is what the library is for! Being exposed to viewpoints you may not agree with, or are simply unfamiliar with. Or when you find a book that you don't like, so that you know more about what you do like!

Our libraries in North Dakota are already well curated, and well managed. I see no reason why we should expend more time and money imposing additional requirements on them to expend more time REMOVING content from their shelves. Especially since in all my time in the library I have never once found their selections to include any problematic material.

I know that there are many out there that wish to ban specific topics from our libraries, because they see books that do not align with their political or religious views as a threat, or are under some misguided perception that children's authors are sneaking in obscenities into children's books.

To them I say, if a few words on a page are enough to invalidate your politics or religion, then it probably wasn't that strongly held in the first place. And that through the care of our librarians and book classification systems, you can be reasonably assured that the material at the library is stored in it's proper locations.

But to those parents out there still concerned about the content in their kids books, maybe do what my mother did for me, and what I do for my Son:

Take some personal responsibility and read with your kids. Or at the very least know what they are reading if participating in their growth is too much work for you.

And with what we have on television these days, maybe its better for your kids to have their nose in a book. They might even learn something along the way....

I do not believe that we should leave it up to the government to decide what we or our children can read. And by the letter of this bill, I believe that there is simply too much room for abuse by those who are scared of words they do not like.

Oppose this bill, and bills like it.

We do not need thinly veiled censorship, and we definitely do not need to allocate additional funding to conduct censorship.

I can decide on my own what is suitable for my kids, I do not need the government to help me with making up my mind.

Leave the parenting to parents, and the library-ing to librarians.  
I think we can handle this on our own.

Here's an easier solution that won't expend ANY additional resources:

If you don't want to read something, then just don't!

And if you don't want your kids to read something, then tell them to pick a different book.

It really is that simple.