

Chairwoman Larson and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I am writing as a private citizen in opposition to SB 2307. I am a librarian and have over ten years of experience working in libraries in North Dakota and other states.

SB 2307 is unnecessary. Libraries have collection development policies in place that outline what is and is not purchased. These policies take professional reviews as well as the needs of the community the library serves into account. Once materials arrive, librarians look at them in more depth to determine if the age recommendations from the publisher or reviewer reflect the community culture or if they are more appropriate for a different age group and shelve materials accordingly. There are also reconsideration procedures in place to address concerns patrons have about materials in the collection. These library best practices are ongoing responsibilities that librarians do every day without government mandate.

Parents also make choices about what is best for their children every day. The same books that one family does not want to read are sought out by other families. Libraries reflect the interests of the communities they serve, not just one group or perspective. The bill's vague definition of "explicit sexual materials" would open the door to individuals placing their own morals and standards on library materials. A small group of individuals should not be making decisions about what is appropriate for the broader community to access in public libraries.

In addition to limiting access to physical libraries, this bill could also impact online resources since it would be very difficult to restrict access to these services based on age. One of the most popular online resources is Libby, which provides users with access to tens of thousands of eBooks and audiobooks. The content available in Libby is very similar to the content available in a physical library while offering many features like the ability to change font type and size that physical books do not offer. These features give people of all ages who benefit from things like a larger font, Dyslexic friendly fonts, etc. a much wider selection of books to choose from than they will often find in print at a physical library.

Many parents also enjoy listening to audiobooks with their children. As technology evolves, it is becoming difficult for libraries to purchase books on CD because they are increasingly becoming unavailable to purchase. Without Libby, libraries will eventually not be able to purchase audiobooks for users to enjoy.

Librarians know their communities, and they make materials available that reflect the needs of their community. Not every book is right for everyone, and that is okay. Please trust parents to make choices that are best for their families and trust librarians to make choices that reflect the wide range of needs and interests present in their communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jennie Archer