

Judiciary Committee

Bismarck, ND

*February 9, 2025*

I am a parent, a grandparent, an officer of the Minot Public Library's Friends group, and a former 40 year Children's Librarian at the Minot Public Library. Today I write to you as a private citizen who has resided in this state for my entire life. I urge you to vote for a DO NOT PASS on SB 2307.

For over 40 years I worked in one of the largest public libraries in the state. We provided access to materials to all of the residents in our city as well as providing materials to schools and citizens of surrounding communities and others in the state. We, also, had databases which could be accessed by anyone who had a valid library card, and we provided programming for virtually all age groups from toddlers to seniors. Participation in programs continued to grow from year to year and registered borrowers rose as well.

This is a very flawed bill. First of all, librarians are very careful with the materials they put in a library. There is something for everyone. Librarians place books for children in a separate area from where adult materials are located. Parents should and need to be responsible for what their OWN child is reading and not worry about what I might let my child read. Now supporters of this bill think that librarians should be responsible for making sure there are no objectional materials that children are exposed to. Now how unrealistic is this I ask? There is no way a librarian in a small town with K-12 students in one school building and public libraries that are only in one room would be able to keep materials in "an area inaccessible to minors" Some say that libraries could just put certain items in a cabinet or behind a counter, but this is not what patrons want. They want to browse the shelves to find what interests them and not have to ask someone permission to get a book. It would cost thousands of dollars if libraries are forced to build barriers so that minors would not have access to materials that are meant for adults.

Let's use a little common sense and let librarians do their jobs without fear of being arrested!!

Sincerely,

Paulette Nelson