

Chester Fritz Library
Chester Fritz Library
3051 University Ave Stop 9000
Grand Forks, ND 58202-9000

To: Senate Judiciary Committee
Date: February 10, 2023
Re: Testimony on Senate Bill 2307

Chairperson Larson and members of the Senate Education Committee:

My name is Rebecca Bichel, and I am Dean of Libraries at the University of North Dakota (UND). I write to point out concerns that some sections of Senate Bill 2307 as it is currently written will have a harmful impact on universities and colleges, and to seek uniform exclusions for higher education. I urge the Committee to amend the bill to specifically state that libraries, museums, and archives at colleges and universities are excluded from all sections of the bill.

I appreciate that some sections of the bill specifically exclude libraries at colleges and universities. Section 5 of the bill, for example, specifically excludes colleges and universities from impact by sections 12.1-27.1-01 and 12.1-27.1-03. However, Sections 6 and 7 include the phrase “state agency,” which would include archives, libraries, and museums at state-funded colleges universities in the scope of the bill. I believe that based on the previous exclusions, colleges and universities were intended to be excluded from these sections as well.

Without an exclusion for higher education for the entire bill, the bill could unintentionally limit students, faculty, staff, and community researchers at UND and other NDUS institutions from accessing critical digital resources. Absent such an amendment, the bill would require significant technology implementations with additional time and financial costs that would negatively impact higher education financially and lead to restrictions of content for all users, not just K-12 students.

Section 6, subsection 6c currently reads, “State agency does not include the state library.” I urge the Committee to expand that language to include: “State agency does not include the state library or state-funded institutions of higher learning” in Sections 6 and 7.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Rebecca Bichel
Dean of Libraries and Information Resources
The University of North Dakota