

Please VOTE NO and DO NOT PASS SB 2307. This bill potentially criminalizes librarians for having in their collections any material that any member of the public finds objectionable and “sexually explicit.” Libraries internally already have policies and procedures in place for people to share their objections to any materials in the library with library staff, to have that material put aside and reviewed and a decision made on how to handle the complaint. These objections were comprehensively dealt with in HB 1205 passed in the previous legislative session and mostly detailing procedures already in place in libraries.

Some people are overly sensitive [or perhaps themselves are highly sexualized, thinking of most events in the world as having a sexual component], such as the woman who objected to a book on presidents that had been carefully researched and well-reviewed by people knowledgeable about U.S. history and about children’s books because it mentioned that one or more presidents and had mistresses. This is sexually explicit? Children have never heard discussions, arguments, or celebrity gossip about people having romantic and sexual relations outside of marriage? They themselves have not experienced parents seeking and/or getting divorced because of relations one or both parents had outside the marriage? This kind of objection and many more could make it very difficult for libraries to hold materials and to offer services, while overly sensitive, or maliciously intended people come in and pull books and other materials off shelves, objecting to anything in them that somehow, maybe references sex, reproduction, or other matters where sex might play a part. Most items in library collections are devoid of any mentions of sex, but no matter to these self-appointed “guardians” and censors.

Is sex education pornography? Is art in which nudes are depicted pornography? What about depictions or descriptions of giving birth? How about natural science books that talk about “mating behavior”? THIS IS RIDICULOUS and potentially harmful interference in how libraries are managed, how collections are gathered, and how libraries handle [with sensitivity and care and concerted listening] complaints from the public.

How about the idea that the library needs separate closed off areas where materials deemed to have adult content or sexual information or the like are housed? Most libraries have open plans, without closed doors and sections. Also, many libraries hire high-school-aged workers to shelve materials. Can they no longer allow people 17 and under to shelve materials? How much additional money will libraries need to spend to remodel libraries to put up walls and doors and reconfigure space to close off adult collections? How much additional money will they need to spend on hiring additional clerical, professional, paraprofessional staff to do shelving they no longer have the lower-paid part-time page staff to do? How many people will seek to work in libraries, knowing that they can be deemed a criminal simply because they work there and there are materials a few people have claimed are harmful, whether or not in fact, these materials are? After the court of public opinion and the haters and stalkers inspired by inaccurate and hate- and fear-mongering language on social media have made it hard for these people simply to come to work or to be out and about in their communities?

VOTE NO on SB 2307. DO NOT PASS SB 2307.

Sincerely, Susan Dingle, District 35, and a voter in every election