February 7, 2025

Senator Larson and members of the Judiciary Committee,

For the record, my name is Jason Bedsaul, Director of ODIN, North Dakota University System – Core Technology Services Division and I appreciate the opportunity to share our expertise and insight on the impacts of SB2307 to our services and the state's libraries.

Let me say at the start that my comments are as Director of ODIN and are intended to be neutral. We take no position and none of the following should be considered as "In Favor of" or "Opposed to".

I am providing neutral testimony – specifically relating to Section 6 – so the committee can make an informed decision on the impact this legislation would have on the Statewide Database program and to all libraries we serve through it.

Potential Impacts

We have identified a few areas where this bill would have an impact:

1. **Fiscal Impact**. Our current systems only verify location, not identity. Libraries subscribe to the resources, but we don't verify any personally identifying information – age, name, etc. This solution is simple in design but is admittedly a dated way to provide access to resources so an update of our authentication system would improve our filtering abilities and security overall to help libraries comply with this law change. Updating to identity verification without fiscally burdening libraries would require a new solution. We estimate a statewide increase of $1,110,837 this biennium and $926,956 over the next biennium. This system would enable libraries to filter and block K-12 viewing and access while preserving access for non-K-12 patrons, as proposed in the bill. A more detailed breakdown of these costs by library type and location has also been provided as testimony should this bill be amended to exclude specific library types like how the State Library has been excluded.

2. **Pedagogical Impact**. Many of the resources are multidisciplinary and are used by students in high schools and adults in public libraries across the state. With the current stipulation that libraries need to preemptively prevent K-12 access to

materials that some citizens could find to be in non-compliance with subsection 2.3, some popular multidisciplinary databases would have to be disabled entirely for schools. For example, in the last full data period collected, Grand Forks Public Schools used EBSCO's Academic Search Complete over 6,500 times, Lisbon over 3,800 times, and Devils Lake over 2,300 times.

3. **Collection management**. Many of the databases update automatically without direct library intervention and contain millions of materials. For example, Lake Region State College students have access to over 200 million ebooks, journal and newspaper articles, while West Fargo Public Library offers over 16 million resources from EBSCO alone. Verifying all resources for ongoing compliance with subsection 2.3 would present logistical challenges.

4. **Non-K-12 patron impac**t. Most database and ebook providers can remove specific materials upon request, but doing so often requires additional effort from both vendors and staff to create customized collections. We have also heard from some vendors that preventing K-12 access alone is not possible so some targeted removal from a database collection would result in all patrons losing access, not just K-12.

5. **Underserved/Rural community impact**. A core focus of our mission is to serve the state's underserved population. Many rural school districts operate understaffed and there are many public libraries that operate as volunteer-only. ODIN can deliver these resources with our current system with minimal technical effort from the school or library. Smaller and rural schools and libraries rely on the program as an easy and affordable opt-in program to instantly add a wide basket of educational resources for their patrons.

6. **Stability of the Program**. Institutions of Higher Education rely on some of these resources to maintain accreditation. The price we can provide them with and the ability to 'spread out' the costs across many libraries helps ensure we are being good stewards of state and local public resources. We anticipate that academic libraries will find a way to procure many of these resources on their own and perhaps change their policies to prevent non campus access to K-12 students, but the total costs will likely rise with less access than we are currently able to provide.

I maintain we are not testifying on the merits or intent of the bill. Our intent is to inform this committee and the legislative body how the program works and what the current technical limitations are in complying with SB2307.

Thank you for your time and consideration and I appreciate the opportunity to provide additional information as you deliberate on SB2307. Below is a bit more information about the Statewide Database Program and ODIN. I have submitted along with this testimony the

detailed quote I mentioned earlier as well as a breakdown of the Statewide Database Program, what's included, and how billing works as supplemental information.

Best,

Jason Bedsaul
Director of Online Dakota Information Network (ODIN)
jason.bedsaul@ndus.edu | 701-969-9135
www.odin.nodak.edu

About the Statewide Database Program

ODIN provides authentication and billing support for several academic database vendors - EBSCO, Gale/Cengage, ProQuest, Capstone (PebbleGo), OCLC, and Britannica, among others. The supported resources are used over 1 million times a month from over 220 participating libraries, including:
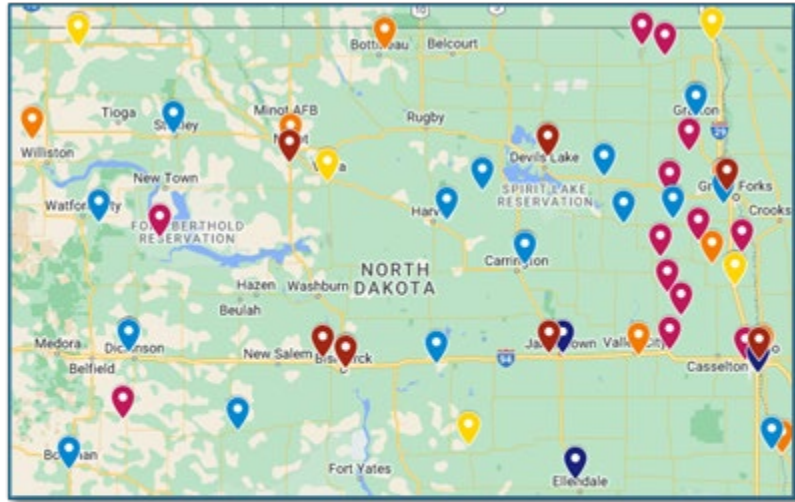
- All public, private, and tribal colleges and universities,
- 138 school districts, and
- 61 public libraries.

We, along with the State Library and a committee of librarians, collaborate with Minnesota and South Dakota to pool our collective bargaining power to negotiate the best price possible. Combined with decades of additional fiscal support – nearly a quarter of a million dollars per biennium - from this legislative body, we can bring a diverse collection of high-quality educational resources to all students and citizens at an affordable rate.

The program is widely used with an average of over 1 million searches a month across the state and remains an integral part of our efforts and mission to provide our most rural communities with high quality, educational resources.

About ODIN

ODIN, a subdivision of the North Dakota University System Core Technology Services Division (NDUS CTS), provides library management services and system support for 67 member libraries across North Dakota, including the 11 NDUS institutions and the ND State Library. The remaining libraries served by ODIN are comprised of two private higher education institutions, K-12 schools,

This map denotes the locations of ODIN's 67 member libraries across the state. The legend on the right indicates the type and quantity of libraries served.

K-12 (22) Special (8)
Public (16) K-12/Public (5)
Higher Ed (13) Private Higher Ed (3)

public libraries, and special libraries. The ODIN Office also provides authentication services for E-resource access to other ND libraries. In total, over 300 ND libraries and schools benefit from ODIN's services.