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**Kim Johnson**

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Dear Chairperson and Members of the Senate,

I, a lifelong North Dakotan and weekly library patron, am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill SB 2307 for multiple reasons listed below, but mainly because every parent deserves trust and responsibility, every child deserves access to age-appropriate materials, and every librarian the right to work in peace.

I believe that parents decide what materials their children should access and view. According to the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights (<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>), "Librarians and governing bodies should maintain that parents—and only parents—have the right and the responsibility to restrict the access of their children—and only their children—to library resources." In other words, this detrimental bill, if passed, would place the rights and responsibility (fiscal and more) onto librarians and governing bodies. Librarians and governing bodies do not have parental rights. They should not be making choices on behalf of children deciding what constitutes age-appropriate materials and obscenity controls.

The title of this punitive bill states there would be a new definition of a public library. Public libraries have been in human existence for over 5,000 years. I find it problematic to "redefine" what a public library is, what libraries do, what they catalog and organize, etc., especially by well-meaning yet under-qualified individuals. Also, the legal and administrative oversight to ensure compliance of this bill would be prohibitively expensive and counterproductive to educational and civil freedoms.

I never thought I would hear a legislator suggest penalizing librarians for doing their job, which is what this bill would do. Like abortion bans, states like Idaho are becoming health care deserts. No medical resident or OB-GYN wants to work within Idaho borders due to the laws penalizing doctors doing their job of providing healthcare. If this bill is passed, we will lose talented North Dakotan librarians to states where they can complete their work without fear of persecution, prosecution, and harassment. North Dakota will have a questionable reputation amongst parents and professionals, like Idaho does

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today. The principle of library service, free and equitable access, applies to all users, minors as well as adults. Lack of access to information can be harmful to minors.

I urge this committee to put responsibility onto the parents. Parents signed up to be held accountable for their children's environment, education, and well-being. We owe librarians our thanks and protection from being held accountable for the choices made by others. I urge you to reject SB 2307 for all North Dakotans. Thank you for reading my testimony.

Sincerely,

**Kimberlee Johnson**