

For the consideration of those discussing and voting on SB2307,

I have just read through the current draft of SB2307, and I would like to express my vehement disagreement with the proposed bill. As somebody who has studied both language and literature, much of the verbiage of the bill either misses or intentionally ignores the primary effects such a bill would cause.

Although this bill attempts to wrap most of its language around the concept of obscenity, which even then is counter to the Supreme Court's decisions on the matter over the past seventy years, its effects would be more far-reaching than issues of the obscene. It would essentially be a massive step in the direction of making libraries illegal and several steps toward the sorts of book banning and book burning that are associated with some of the worst eras in human history.

I would also like to note that this sort of philosophy – that of forbidding the presentation or even existence of concepts deemed unfit – invariably has the opposite effect. Psychological and historical studies have shown repeatedly that making something taboo provides it with a mystique and an allure. When the Chinese banned Western texts, they were smuggled in greater numbers than they had ever been imported before. Countless examples throughout history follow a similar pattern.

There is nothing inherently wrong with wanting to protect children from things they are not ready for, but this bill will not help with that regard. Rather, it should be the focus of the State and the parents therein to properly prepare children for when they do need to face more adult issues. This is not to say that young people should be intentionally exposed to obscenity, but rather that they should be able to see that issues they may not be ready for can be handled in healthy and mature ways.

If such books as this bill considers obscene are treated as secretive, risqué, or “forbidden,” children and young adults will undoubtedly be curious, and they will use whatever resources are at their disposal, such as the Internet, to gain access. If, however, these issues are treated as no big deal, then they would have little reason to notice them in the first place.

I am not a librarian myself, but I have worked in education, and I am very much of the opinion that honest education will get a far better result than forbiddance. Providing a positive example for children in dealing with adult issues will always be a better solution than making such examples illegal.

After reading through the current draft of this bill, I can only conclude that it is attempting to do a bad thing in a bad way. This is the wrong approach, as both history and human psychology have shown repeatedly over the years. This bill is far too abusable, and could very well result in libraries being essentially illegal, and considering that the loss of libraries is one of the things associated with the beginning of the Dark Ages, I would highly recommend pulling any support for SB2307.

Thank you.
Robert Wilson