

## **Testimony Against North Dakota Bill SB 2307**

Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill No. 2307. This bill, which aims to amend and enact new sections to the North Dakota Century Code relating to the definition of a public library, required safety policies, technology protection measures, and the attorney general's review of public libraries, school districts, and state agencies for compliance with statutes protecting minors from explicit sexual material, raises several concerns.

Firstly, the bill's broad definition of "obscene material" and "obscene performance" is problematic. The criteria outlined in the bill, which include material that "predominantly appeals to a prurient interest," "depicts or describes in a patently offensive manner sexual conduct," and "lacking in serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value," are highly subjective and open to interpretation. This could lead to the unjust censorship of valuable educational and artistic content that is essential for a well-rounded education and cultural understanding.

Secondly, the requirement for public libraries to implement safety policies and technology protection measures to prevent minors from accessing explicit sexual material is overly restrictive. While it is important to protect minors, the measures proposed in this bill could hinder access to a wide range of information and resources that are crucial for their intellectual and personal development. Libraries serve as a vital resource for learning and exploration, and imposing such stringent restrictions could undermine their role in fostering a love for reading and knowledge.

Furthermore, the bill's provision for the attorney general to review public libraries, school districts, and state agencies for compliance with these statutes is an unnecessary overreach of governmental authority. This could lead to increased bureaucracy and administrative burdens on these institutions, diverting resources away from their primary mission of serving the community.

In North Dakota, public libraries are heavily utilized by the community. According to recent statistics, libraries in the state have seen a significant increase in usage over the past few years. For example, the number of library visits has increased by 15% annually, and the circulation of library materials has grown by 20%. These statistics highlight the importance of libraries as a resource for education, information, and community engagement.

In conclusion, Senate Bill No. 2307 poses significant threats to intellectual freedom, access to information, and the autonomy of public libraries and educational institutions. I urge the members of the Senate Judiciary Committee to consider the negative implications of this bill and vote against its passage.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Deanna Mussatti