

Testimony Opposing SB 2307

Presented by Hannah Lynne James
Fargo Public Library Board Member

Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Hannah Lynne James, and I have served on the Fargo Public Library Board since 2021. I am here to express my strong opposition to SB 2307, a bill that places an undue financial and administrative burden on public and school libraries, infringes upon First Amendment rights, and overreaches into parental responsibilities.

This bill is **fiscally impossible** for many North Dakota libraries, particularly those in rural communities. Many of our libraries operate with limited staff and funding. The mandates imposed by SB 2307 would divert already scarce resources from essential library services to unnecessary compliance measures that could ultimately force libraries to limit collections, reduce access, or even close their doors.

Furthermore, SB 2307 would make **digital access to materials nearly impossible** for those under 17. Services like Libby provide invaluable access to books, audiobooks, and research materials, especially for young people in communities without robust physical collections. This bill would effectively ban minors from accessing age-appropriate content, despite existing library policies that ensure materials are already categorized appropriately.

Libraries have long-standing policies and trained professionals who ensure **materials are shelved appropriately based on age and content**. The responsibility for determining what is appropriate for a child should **remain with parents and guardians**, not with the government. SB 2307 shifts that responsibility onto librarians and library boards, creating a system where vague and subjective criteria could lead to widespread censorship and restricted access to information.

Finally, this bill raises **serious First Amendment concerns**. The freedom to read and access information is a fundamental right. SB 2307 imposes an overreaching government restriction on intellectual freedom, effectively censoring materials and limiting access based on vague definitions of "explicit sexual material." These types of laws create a dangerous precedent, stifling diverse perspectives and diminishing the educational and cultural value that libraries provide.

I urge you to **reject SB 2307** and instead support policies that respect parental choice, uphold intellectual freedom, and allow libraries to continue serving their communities effectively. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Hannah James

hannahlynnejames@gmail.com

Fargo, North Dakota