

Subject: SB 2307 - OPPOSE

I am a resident of Rutland, ND and have lived here for over 20 years. I had children who attended Sargent Central High School in Forman, ND.

I'm writing to provide testimony in opposition to SB 2307. First, it applies a vague standard to what is considered "obscene" material to a "reasonable person" from contemporary North Dakota. The definition of obscene or inappropriate may vary wildly from person to person, even amongst "reasonable" people. Why is a state bill trying to supercede the authority of a parent? Is it not a parent's responsibility to decide what is and is not appropriate for their child to read and or listen to? If parents are involved in their child's life, they will be responsible for material their child checks out from a library. No one is arguing that explicit sexual material should be made available to middle schoolers. What I am saying is that a too broad definition of obscenity removes classic books and nationally celebrated and recognized books from what may be a student's only way to access them. Please don't make it more difficult for students to access quality books that may kickstart a love of reading.

It is the parents' responsibility to know what their children are looking at or checking out. Just as it is a parent's responsibility to know what the children are looking at on their smart phones. Are you going to go after the internet next to pass laws that this same type of material cannot be posted on the internet?

I've also read in a recent article about this bill that one of the legislators who introduced it was downplaying the impact, indicating that a moderately sized cabinet would surely be enough for most libraries to contain material that would be impacted by this bill. I believe this assumption is absolutely wrong. I think it more likely that sequestration of these materials would need to be handled via placement within entirely separate rooms for most of our state's public libraries. This is incredibly unfeasible given the low budgets our public libraries often have to work with. In fact, this point may get at the true desire by those pushing this bill which could be to remove such materials entirely and further reduce the value our public libraries bring. If that be the case, it is unacceptable.

Thank you for the time to review this testimony.

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