

I have served on the West Fargo Public Library (WFPL) Board of Directors for almost two full terms (my term ends this summer). According to ND Century Code 40-38-04 some of the general duties of the board are:

*“To make and adopt such bylaws, rules and regulations for the management of the Library, to employ qualified personnel to administer the Library and dispense library Services”.*

I take my duties as a former President, former Treasurer and current Member at Large very seriously. In that time, we have had the opportunity to review several applicants for our Library Director position. I can assure you that the people who are applying and obtaining these positions are highly educated in library sciences and most often hold master's and doctoral degrees.

Have you wondered how these highly educated librarians select material for the library catalog? I have. Librarians choose material based on the needs of their specific community. They hear suggestions from residents. They pay attention to what is popular. They read multiple professional reviews. They work with a distributor to get access to the materials. Distributors hold materials that have been edited by a publisher. In order to get to a publisher, the material is most often vetted by a literary agent. Before an item is placed on the shelf, it goes through the hands of multiple library staff too, from selection to processing to cataloging to finally being placed on the shelf. As you can see, there are already many trained professionals reviewing materials prior to materials being made available to the general public. I trust the professionals.

The materials available in a public library may not be for everyone. As a parent, there are books that I don't want my elementary-aged child to have access to. This is where the rights of the adult in the household need to be applied. Fortunately, our library also has a guideline in place that minors need to be accompanied by someone 13 or older. It is up to me, the adult, to choose who can take my young child to the library. It is up to me, the adult, to assist my children in selecting materials that I feel are appropriate for them. Our library does a great job of separating items into collections by reading level and age group and I trust that my child's caretakers can easily help him navigate to appropriate content. Finally, it is up to me, the adult, to engage in difficult discussions with my child about what may or may not be appropriate for them.

As the Century Code states, local library boards are already adopting and reviewing regulations within their libraries, as well as ensuring quality staff are in place to create a catalog of information that is wide-reaching and reflects the needs and values of our communities. What we have is working beautifully already. I advise you to vote no on SB 2307.