

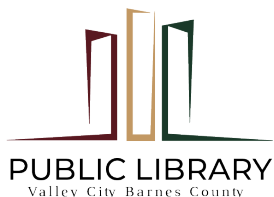
Valley City Barnes County Public Library
410 N Central Avenue
Valley City, ND 58072

Dear Chairman Klemin and members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Anita Tulp, and I am the Director of the Valley City Barnes County Public Library. I am writing to you to express my opposition to SB 2307.

Our library was the dream of The Tuesday Club who in 1897 established a library fund with ten cents they had left after paying for their club dues. After many many fundraisers and an appeal to Andrew Carnegie for a donation, our library opened on October 5th, 1903. It is one of only three Carnegie libraries in the state of ND still functioning as a library. This is just one of the reasons I oppose this bill. We have many visitors during the year that want to see and admire our historic building. We have many of the original features in the building including the original card catalog, the newspaper rack, tables and chairs, and of course the original circulation desk and beautiful bookcases. Part of our vision statement is to “preserve the past” so last summer we implemented a \$450,000 project to restore the original rotunda and dome and reroof the entire library. That project was completely paid for with grant money and donations from our patrons and concerned citizens. We are proud to say that we did not use any taxpayer funds to complete such a huge project. If this bill passed, it would mean access to our beautiful historic building may be limited to only adults as this part of our library houses the adult collection. Parents that grew up visiting this library would not be able to share its wonder with their children, and grandparents would not be able to bring their grandchildren when they are visiting.

Parents utilizing this library will often make it a family event. They will begin in the children’s library and spend time playing games or doing craft projects or even building with Legos before browsing for books to check out. After finding some great books for their children, they will come upstairs to the adult part of the library so they can browse for their books. We often hear them tell their children that “You have your books, now we want to find our books.” We see them encouraging their children to sit and look at their books while they take time to browse the collection. We trust our parents to guide their children while they are in the library. We spend time in conversation with parents so that we know what they are looking for in subject matter. We trust that they will ask us questions. We listen when they say they don’t want their children to read scary books, or they don’t want them to read books with magic, or books with violence, or they don’t want them to read books with any kind of romance, or books that are not right for their age. We help them find books that are interesting and challenging for children that read at a higher level yet are within the parameters of what their parents want them to read.



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Limiting access to the adult portion of the library is not only impossible without destroying some of our historic features, but it would also put unreasonable expectations on the way parents, grandparents, and childcare providers utilize our library. Patrons could no longer expect to have access to the whole library if they brought a child with them. They would have to change their schedule to accommodate two separate visits to the library, plan for a babysitter, or choose not to come at all because of the limitations. I would not be able to bring my 7-year-old grandson to my office on a day when his parents need an extra hand because of its location, and my 14-year-old granddaughter wouldn't be allowed to come to my office after school while waiting for a ride home.

Another reason I oppose SB 2307 is the fact that it is very vague and seems to allow anyone to object to a book or service in the library without question or process to determine that it is valid. They simply have to report it to the State's Attorney General for his determination. That bypass of all our library policies and procedures takes any sort of resolution out of our local Library Board's hands. The fact that someone from another state or even country who is not even a resident of our community or state, could object to a book they saw that we have in our library just by looking at our online catalog is mind boggling. They could possibly be challenging a resource that is vital to many of our community members. Libraries curate their collections according to what the community wants and needs. We don't have unlimited budgets so there would be no reason to spend funds on materials that would not circulate. I could envision that this could become overwhelming for our Attorney General and books and materials would just simply be removed because there was no time to do an accurate study of it.

Please vote "Do Not Pass" on SB 2307. Thank you for your time.

Anita Tulp, Director
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Valley City, ND 58072
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