

February 9, 2025

Chairwoman Larson and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Rachel Waldo, and I am writing to you to urge your opposition and nay vote on Senate Bill #2307. The reasons I and many other North Dakotans feel so strongly about opposing this bill are threefold. First, this bill will negatively impact the educational process of children and teens, both in and outside the classroom. Second, this bill will place undue and often unachievable burden on our rural libraries which many communities of all ages depend on. And lastly, this bill is a redundant waste of our time and taxpayer dollars which could and should be spent on addressing the more pressing concerns of real North Dakotans.

As a former participant in and then coach of the Dickinson High School Speech Team from the years of 2014 - 2022, I know the access that North Dakota libraries provide to high schools is paramount to teaching the research and fact-finding skills our youth build in such programs. In events such as Extemporaneous Speaking, Radio Broadcasting, and all of the original oratory events, teens research and build arguments on every niche topic their hearts desire. Often relying on the digital databases of their school libraries, which are often provided by the North Dakota State Library. This bill would severely limit their access to such sources which may be published in academic journals cut off as casualties of this legislation.

Further, as the Theatre Director of Dickinson High School from 2021-2023, I relied upon the library system's access to classic plays and books of monologues and one-acts to offer students resources with which to direct their own plays and prepare for professional auditions. My program would not have been able to handle the cost of paying for each of these resources individually as we already operated on a very thin budget.

Next, as a librarian, I understand the concern for ensuring that children are not exposed to materials that may cause them distress or cultivate antisocial behaviors. However, this legislation would place undue burdens on libraries to comply with the requirement that no materials which may contain content which *may* be deemed "explicit" be displayed or available in areas where a minor *may* be. This will necessitate costly construction which is not feasible for small, rural libraries – the most numerous in our state. These libraries will be faced with the choice of closures, temporary or permanent, barring minors from entering at all, or removal of adult collections which are vital in nursing homes and assisted living facilities as mental enrichment to prevent cognitive decline.

Lastly, I believe this legislation is unnecessary. There are policies in place in every library in the state which provide strong guidance in compliance with the previous legislative session's House Bill #1205 to ensure collection development criteria place library materials into age-appropriate collections. If a mistake is made, each library also has a request for reconsideration process to be handled by local representatives of the community library board. Forgive the parlance, but as North Dakotans in the ever changing and more expensive world, we have bigger fish to fry than trying to fix a process that isn't broken.

Thank you for your time and service to our state. I know you work hard to ensure a better life for all North Dakotans, young and old. This legislation will have a real impact on my life and of those I love. I urge you to please consider my words and vote no on SB #2307.

Sincerely,
Rachel Waldo