

Legislators of the 69th Legislative Session,

We are Mr. and Mrs. Cody and Sam Hazzard-Bradley. We live within District 1 here in Williston, North Dakota mere blocks from the Williston Community Library and we are writing to you today to urge you to VOTE NO on SB2307!

We live within walking distance of the Williston Community Library and participate in many of the programs offered by our library such as Scrabble Club and the monthly craft and we have a young child who we plan on taking to the Storytimes at the library once the weather is no longer sub zero.

We greatly value our library and all that it adds to our life and the lives of our community members. As such, we are very concerned about how this bill would negatively affect our library and the tax dollars that it would cost our community to make the changes laid out in this bill as it is a well known fact that libraries do not generate revenue and, after preliminary research we found that our library has policies in place to prevent the things that this bill aims to address such as a material selection policy, a request for reconsideration of materials policy and an internet access and computer use policy thus negating the need for such legislation at a state level.

I, Cody, have lived in Williston for my entire life and only recently got my library card as my curiosity was piqued after hearing about and seeing information in the news about libraries and listening to my friends discussing the bills against libraries in my community.

I got my library card and quickly realized that all the things that people seemed concerned about within the library were simply not problems at all. Instead, I realized that, in addition to books, our library had board games and movies available for checkout, an amazing online resource called Libby that I could use to read eBooks and audiobooks and many other programs and services that add value to my life and to my wife and child.

I drive for a living. I am up before sunrise all year round, and I am not a morning person. Having Libby readily accessible on my phone and being able to listen to audiobooks while I drive each morning has proved to be an invaluable resource in keeping me awake and alert so that I am able to drive safely and provide for my family.

I have only ever had good experiences with my library, I trust the library staff to do their job and follow their policies and I know that if I ever have a concern about a material within the library, I can submit a Request for Reconsideration of that material so that my voice can be heard.

I, Sam, am also very concerned about how this bill will negatively affect my library. I am and have been very excited about all that our library offers in the way of programs for children and am very excited to start taking our baby to the library for storytimes.

Part of our reasoning as to why we bought our home in the part of town that we did was because we wanted to live near our library and to be able to walk to the library and the park next to our library. I am grateful for the community that being able to connect with the other parents that take their children to the programs at the library will provide.

I am incredibly grateful for the Early Literacy Kits and STEAM Kits that our library has that I will be able to make use of with our child as he grows. Williston does not have a Montessori school that our child can attend the way that I did as a child but, the kits that the library offers fill that need within our community and I am so very grateful for the library staff at our library who have put all this thoughtful effort into their collection curation.

Since my husband and I began looking to expand our family, I started looking forward to taking our children to the library for storytimes and lego times and STEAM activities. I have looked forward to leading by example and picking out books for myself to read and for our children to learn from me and pick out books that they want to read.

This bill would take that away from our family. I would be unable to peruse the shelves of our library with my child in the stroller. I would not get the experiences of talking to my son about how I find and select materials. My son will not get to observe my modeled behavior and be able to then learn how to do it himself.

Additionally, due to the vagueness of this bill, my husband and I are both very concerned about how this would restrict access to age appropriate books about puberty and consent. Because of personal experiences we know how important age appropriate books about puberty, in addition to teaching prepubescent children about what will begin to happen to their body, help children who have been molested or sexually assaulted realize what has happened to them and give them the words to tell their grown ups what has or is happening to them. Part of properly caring for the health of the children in our communities must include making this information available to them in an age appropriate manner rather than relegating these age appropriate resources to the adult section of the library.

All of this is to say that this bill is unnecessary due to the policies that are already in place at our library and that, in our personal experience, seeks to address a problem that is nonexistent. Additionally, this will spend our tax dollars in a way that is not only unnecessary but will also detract from all the good that our library does and will greatly limit the expansion of the online resources that help keep one of us safe on the road and will detract from the overall experience of our library visits.

As such, we would like to urge you to VOTE NO on SB2307.

Sincerely,

Mr. and Mrs. Hazzard-Bradley