

Chair Larson, Vice Chair Paulson, and members of the Committee,

**Request: Vote “No” for SB 2307**

My name is Christine Cherry. I have been a Minot resident for the past 10 years, a volunteer at Minot Public Library for the past 5, and have been a member of the Board of Trustees for the last 3. I am also an avid reader and mother to an 11-year-old son who also is an avid reader. I am writing in opposition of SB 2307.

I understand wanting to protect children’s innocence. You’ll likely be hearing about porn being available in public or school libraries, but that simply is not the case. Collection development is not something taken lightly, and includes materials for adults, teens, and children categorized in sections accordingly and all these materials fall in line with the Miller Test defined by the Supreme Court’s 1973 case *Miller v California*. We also already have a process outlined so members of the community can object to materials they find offensive. In the past year, there have been 2 at Minot Public Library. As the current President of the Board of Trustees, I personally read every book that is challenged so I can make an informed decision when voting on whether to keep, remove, or relocate the challenged material. These are not decisions I take lightly, but two complaints out of over 100,000 items in our collection and over 20,000 library card holders tells me that this is not an issue in our community.

I also have concerns with some of the language in this bill. We would be remiss not to mention that what is appropriate for a high school student may not be appropriate for an elementary school student. We keep our children’s section separate from our adult and teen sections for this reason. Our current policy is that children under 8 must be accompanied by an adult. However, the way this bill is written, it would be a crime for an adult woman to browse the adult sections with their child in tow. Additionally, I worry about the implications this would have a local, small businesses as “establishments that minors are or may be invited as part of the general public.” Bookstores’ front window displays are often based on what’s popular to draw in customers. Social Media communities like “bookstagram” and “book tok” have driven the success of contemporary romance and fantasy romance authors like Colleen Hoover, Sarah J. Maas, and Rebecca Yarros, whose books contain sexual content. Walking by the covers on the street isn’t likely to raise any alarm bells but because the bill also states the words “...or available content of which either contains explicit material harmful to minors...” the new release of “Onyx Storm” could be objectionable to put in the window display next to a public walkway. Personally, I think sex is a normal part of life and it makes sense to include it a romance story about adult dragon riders, however some might argue that dragons appeal to minors so the fact that there’s sexual content at all is harmful. Furthermore, the bill states that when “...taken

as a whole, the reasonable person would find lacking in serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.” This is extremely subjective. An opinion about a materials’ merit is based on an individual’s own values, morals, culture, religion, upbringing, and education. This bill would limit everyone’s access to materials, based on a single person’s judgement.

I recognize that the intent of this bill is to not limit the access of popular books to adult readers, but the vague and subjective language of this bill will have that affect. If a parent can’t shop or browse for reading materials without their children, they will have few options other than ordering from Amazon. That hurts local businesses, it puts unnecessary strain on library resources, including time, money, and personnel, and it harms citizens who can’t afford or are unsure if they want to add an item to their personal collections.

For these reasons, I oppose SB 2307.

Thank you for your consideration.

Christine Cherry