2025 SENATE EDUCATION

SB 2278

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee
Room JW216, State Capitol

SB 2278
1/28/2025

Relating to the retention of library materials.

9:00 a.m. Chairman Beard called the meeting to order.

Members Present: Chairman Beard; Vice-Chairman Lemm; Senators: Boschee, and Gerhardt.

Members Absent: Senators: Axtman and Wobbema

Discussion Topics:

- Feasibility study
- Original context of books
- Vital record of culture

9:00 a.m. Senator Boehm, District 33, testified in favor and submitted testimony #32110.

9:05 a.m. Jerry Rostad, Vice Chancellor of Strategy and Strategic Engagement ND University System, testified in favor and submitted testimony #32012.

9:08 a.m. Mary Soucie, ND State Librarian, testified neutral.

9:14 a.m. Committee discussion

9:18 a.m. Senator Boschee moved a Do Pass on proposed amendment #25.0846.02001.

9:18 a.m. Senator Gerhardt seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Todd Beard	Y
Senator Randy D. Lemm	Y
Senator Michelle Axtman	AB
Senator Josh Boschee	Y
Senator Justin Gerhardt	Y
Senator Mike Wobbema	AB

Motion Passed 4-0-2

9:24 a.m. Senator Boschee moved a Do Pass as amended.

9:24 a.m. Senator Lemm seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Todd Beard	Y
Senator Randy D. Lemm	Y
Senator Michelle Axtman	AB
Senator Josh Boschee	Y
Senator Justin Gerhardt	Y
Senator Mike Wobbema	AB

Motion Passed 4-0-2

Senator Gerhardt will carry the bill.

Additional written testimony:

Pamela Carswell, Teen Librarian, submitted testimony #31305 in opposition.

Julie Reiten, citizen, submitted testimony #31378 in opposition.

Kara Geiger, citizen, submitted testimony #31702 in opposition.

Janet Anderson, citizen, submitted testimony #31722 in opposition.

Erin Price, citizen, submitted testimony #31727 in opposition.

Sandi Bates, citizen, submitted testimony #31977 in opposition.

9:28 a.m. Chairman Beard closed the hearing.

Susan Helbling, Committee Clerk

RS 1/28/25
1 of 1

25.0846.02001
Title.03000

Adopted by the Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

SENATE BILL NO. 2278

Introduced by

Senators Boehm, Castaneda, Wobbema

Representatives Frelich, Henderson, Holle

A BILL for an Act to provide a legislative management study relating to the retention of library materials.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

SECTION 1. LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT STUDY - RETENTION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS. During the 2025-26 interim, the legislative management shall consider studying the feasibility and desirability of requiring libraries maintained by state agencies, including the state library and libraries at institutions under the control of the state board of higher education, to retain a copy of any book or other written material that contains the material's original text if the publisher of the material publishes a new version to update language that was common when the the material was originally published to language that is considered more socially progressive, politically correct, inclusive, or less socially offensive. The study must include an analysis of how artificial intelligence has or will affect the retention of library materials ~~and~~, how library materials are updated or altered using artificial intelligence, and the fiscal and operational impact of collection management. The legislative management shall report its findings and recommendations, together with any legislation required to implement the recommendations, to the seventieth legislative assembly.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
SB 2278

Education Committee (Sen. Beard, Chairman) recommends **AMENDMENTS (25.0846.02001)** and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (4 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 2 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2278 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.

Against 2278

It is not my legislators' job to govern what is in my library. If I feel something's inappropriate, I can put it back and tell my children NO. It's my job as their parent. If I feel it's too mature for an area of my library, I can do a reconsideration and ask librarians to think about moving it. That is the LIBRARIAN's job. Librarians are highly trained professional people with degrees in the subject, undergo training regularly, do continuing education periodically and know what they are doing to serve their communities.

We do not need politicos from Devils Lake interfering in Minot nor do we need Valley City legislators prying in Fargo. Librarians work for their communities, not the legislative branch of government. None of the sponsors of this bill have library degrees. They are unqualified.

For a political party that is keen on individual rights, this bill is not taking intellectual freedom seriously. This is government overreach and unneeded. It will be terribly expensive and a waste of taxpayer dollars that could be spent on education and infrastructure. Vote NO!

Pamela Carswell

Librarian

Literate and Sensible Mother

9/11 Survivor Spouse

Julie Reiten

Minot, ND

I am testifying in opposition to SB2278.

First, there is certainly value in retaining original texts in university libraries. This is especially true for classics and texts with ongoing historical value. That said, I don't think it is necessary to mandate that the State Library and all university libraries retain all copies of the original versions of all altered texts.

Library collections are always growing and changing, and there is only so much room in any one library. Librarians already make informed choices about what books they purchase and retain. Sometimes, space considerations make these choices very difficult, but librarians are trained to make them. I think that the preservation of original texts should be and will be a factor university librarians consider when deciding whether or not to retain particular books, but I question mandating that libraries keep any particular book because such a strict requirement limits their ability to keep their collections usable and current within the space limitations they each have to deal with.

What happens if a library's only original text copy of a book develops mold or an insect infestation? Do they really need to keep it if multiple other libraries have the same book with the same text that isn't in a horrible condition that threatens the books shelved near it?

As long as a few libraries keep a copy of the original version of a text, that original version is easily available to anyone who wants to read it in the state. Libraries lend each other books through the mail all the time, so a library user at one library can access materials that their home library no longer owns.

Universities also change over time, and what classes they present and what books they need to support those classes also change. If a university stops offering childhood education courses, for example, should the library be required to continue to retain the original text copies of books for children? Especially, again, if there are a number of other libraries in the state that also have those original texts?

For the most part, libraries obtain e-books through licenses with library e-book vendors. As they only control the license and don't technically own the material, libraries have limited control over e-book and can't prevent or control their alteration.

Librarians can be trusted to do their jobs. For academic librarians in universities, preserving materials for research is part of their jobs. I accessed outdated but historically significant children's books for a university class project at a North Dakota university in the past, and I just checked their catalog, and they still have those outdated books, so I think I can safely say that they're already doing it. I don't think this is something the legislature needs to be involved in.

Unless all or even most libraries in the country are closed or forced to get rid of their print collections, I don't think there is any real danger of losing the original text versions of any classics of literature or significant works. Library censorship rules apply to any books that a library has that someone objects to solely due to content. A library might purchase an altered text to supply a demand for such texts, but they shouldn't get rid of the original simply because it offends people. They might get rid of the original for another reason, however, like because there is no longer a demand for it (no one checks it out) or it develops mold. I don't see the complete lack of demand for the original texts of any classics or significant works happening anytime soon, and even if it does, a university library has less stringent demand requirements than a public or school library does, so such works will be preserved by university libraries anyway, without the need for legislation that requires it.

Statement of Opposition to Senate Bill 2278 **1/27/2025**

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to oppose Senate Bill 2278, which proposes a study on requiring state agency libraries to retain original versions of materials when publishers release updated editions and to examine how artificial intelligence impacts library materials. While this bill may appear to address concerns about preserving the integrity of published works, it raises several significant issues that make it problematic and unnecessary.

Unfunded Mandate for the Study
The bill does not specify who would bear the costs of this study or how it would be funded. Without clear financial provisions, it risks imposing an unfunded mandate that could divert resources away from other critical legislative or educational priorities. Studies of this nature require significant time, staffing, and expertise. It is irresponsible to propose such a study without first addressing the financial and logistical burden it would place on legislative management and the libraries involved.

Overreach into Library Autonomy
Decisions about what materials to keep or remove from library collections should rest with librarians and other professionals trained in collection development and management. These decisions are made based on factors such as relevance, demand, space, and the needs of the community served by the library. The legislature should not insert itself into these decisions or attempt to dictate what libraries retain, as this undermines the professional judgment and independence of librarians. This type of overreach sets a dangerous precedent and could lead to further political interference in library operations.

Redundancy and Impracticality
Libraries are already well-equipped to handle questions of historical preservation. Many institutions retain original works or collaborate with archives and repositories to ensure access to earlier editions of materials when necessary. Mandating that libraries retain all original versions would create unnecessary redundancies. The bill fails to consider the practical realities of library operations, such as limited space and budgets. Requiring retention of outdated materials would place an additional strain on libraries without adding meaningful value to their collections.

Misplaced Legislative Priorities
It is concerning that the legislature is considering intervening in how libraries manage their collections rather than addressing more pressing educational or social issues. The focus should remain on supporting libraries with resources to serve their communities, not micromanaging their collection policies. Legislating what libraries must keep risks politicizing library collections, which should remain spaces of intellectual freedom and access to information.

Ambiguity in Artificial Intelligence Considerations
The bill introduces vague language about studying how artificial intelligence affects library materials, but it does not clarify the scope or objectives of this analysis. This creates unnecessary complexity and opens the door to speculative discussions without a clear connection to library practices.

Senate Bill 2278 is an unfunded and unnecessary proposal that overreaches into library operations, undermines professional autonomy, and risks politicizing decisions about collections. Libraries are already adept at preserving materials and adapting to changes in technology without legislative interference. Instead of pursuing this study, the legislature should focus on providing libraries with the resources they need to serve their communities effectively.

I urge the Committee to reject this bill and commit to supporting, rather than micromanaging, the vital work of North Dakota's libraries.

Sincerely,

Kara L. Geiger
Mandan, ND

January 24, 2025

Chairman Beard and members of the Education Committee:

I am writing as a North Dakota citizen, a library user, and someone who has worked in a variety of libraries, to ask that you vote to oppose SB 2278.

I understand that this bill is only intended to authorize a study, but I strongly believe it would ultimately be a terrible waste of taxpayer dollars as you will only learn that the proposed retention of library materials is unreasonable.

Based simply on space, it would be impossible to retain copies of books that are updated. This will be a particular challenge when it comes to nonfiction books such as those on the topics of science and medicine.

Beyond this issue of space, it would also be a very time-consuming imposition to suppose that library staff would be able to read every new edition of books to compare whether or not language has changed.

Finally: Why? Why is this important? Why is this needed? It makes it seem as though the legislators who introduced this bill want to bring back the “N word,” the “R word,” and the “F word.” Do they want to keep items with slurs like [redacted] too? Is this what we want to use taxpayer money on?

Please do not waste your time and our money and oppose SB 2278.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Anderson

Burlington, ND

Subject: Opposition to SB 2278 – Protect Our Libraries and Support Inclusivity in Education

I am writing to express my strong opposition SB 2278 and urge you to vote DO NOT PASS. This bill would significantly harm the way our libraries serve the community and students across North Dakota.

The core of this proposal would require libraries to keep outdated materials and prevent them from updating their collections with more inclusive language. If an author revises their work to reflect more inclusive, respectful, or accurate representations—such as revising language to reflect more current understandings of race, gender, or identity—SB 2278 would force North Dakota libraries to continue offering the older, potentially outdated versions of the text, even if they no longer align with the modern understanding of inclusivity and equity.

This is not just a minor issue; it's a direct challenge to the very mission of our libraries, which are supposed to provide access to current, accurate, and diverse information. By requiring our libraries to hold onto outdated materials that fail to reflect the evolving language of inclusivity, this bill would hinder libraries' ability to stay current with social progress and academic advancements. It would effectively lock our communities and students into outdated, potentially harmful representations of reality, stifling their ability to engage with the world in a more informed and respectful way.

Libraries play a critical role in fostering education, inclusivity, and understanding. They should be spaces where everyone, regardless of their identity, feels welcome and respected. Preventing libraries from updating their collections to reflect more inclusive and accurate language is a step backward for our state and would set North Dakota libraries back years in their mission to provide valuable, relevant resources for all.

I urge you to consider the long-term consequences of this bill. If enacted, SB 2278 would severely restrict the ability of libraries to offer updated, diverse, and inclusive resources to our communities. We need policies that encourage growth and inclusivity, not ones that restrict the progress our libraries have made.

Please stand with the values of education, inclusivity, and progress. I ask that you oppose SB 2278 and ensure that North Dakota's libraries remain vibrant, inclusive spaces for all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

I strongly oppose creating a legislative management study to determine whether libraries under the direction of the State Board of Higher Education need to retain original texts in their collection. Many others who have already submitted testimony in opposition have lined out perfectly the many pitfalls of researching this topic.
I ask you to vote NO on this issue.

Sandi L. Bates
Private citizen

NORTH DAKOTA
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM
ACCESS. INNOVATION. EXCELLENCE.

House Education Committee
January 27, 2025
Jerry Rostad, Vice Chancellor, NDUS
701.969.9229 | jerry.rostad@ndus.edu

Chair Beard and members of the Senate Education Committee. My name is Jerry Rostad and I serve as a Vice Chancellor of the North Dakota University System (NDUS). I am submitting testimony in support of SB 2278, which calls for a legislative study on the retention of library materials. More specifically, this study will explore the feasibility and desirability of requiring libraries to retain original versions of books and written materials, especially when new editions update language to be more socially progressive, inclusive, or less offensive.

We support this study because it could explore several important questions.

First, we need to understand how any changes would affect library management and archive strategies. The study could help determine who would be responsible for enforcing any changes and how libraries would be audited for compliance.

Next, strategic goals involving inclusivity and modern educational resources might also be influenced as there could be a demand to balance preservation with contemporary relevance. Relatedly, with the rapid progression of technology and particularly artificial intelligence, the study could also evaluate how these technologies impact the updating and alteration of library materials. Finally, it would be important to understand how the retention of multiple versions of texts might have implications for library storage, resources, and personnel. A financial impact statement could be included, too.

In conclusion, the NDUS advocates for the approval of SB 2278, with an emphasis on careful consideration of the financial and operational impacts on our institutions.

Chairman Beard and Members of the Committee, My name is Keith Boehm and I am the District 33 Senator.

I stand before you to introduce senate bill 2278 which addresses a matter of vital importance to the preservation of knowledge and history in our state: the retention of original library materials.

This bill calls for a comprehensive study to explore whether state-maintained libraries, including those in our educational institutions, should retain copies of books and written materials in their original form, even when publishers release updated versions with modernized language.

Let me begin by acknowledging a fundamental truth: language evolves, and society progresses. These are positive and necessary aspects of cultural growth. Updates to language can make texts more inclusive, relevant, and accessible to contemporary audiences. However, these updates should not come at the expense of preserving the original context in which these works were created.

Consider, for example, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain. This classic has been both lauded and criticized for its portrayal of race and its use of language that is deeply offensive by today's standards. Some modern editions of the book have replaced racially charged terms with less inflammatory language. While this can make the book more palatable to contemporary readers, it also changes the historical lens through which we understand the societal norms and prejudices of Twain's time.

Another example comes from the works of Roald Dahl. Recently, new editions of his beloved children's books, such as *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, were edited to remove language deemed insensitive. While the changes aimed to make the stories more inclusive, they sparked a global debate about censorship, historical accuracy, and the preservation of an author's original intent.

If we lose access to the original versions of these works, we risk losing a vital record of our cultural and historical evolution. These texts—unaltered and in their original form—offer us invaluable insights into the ideas, struggles, and values of the past, even when they challenge or contradict today's norms.

Furthermore, this study will examine the growing role of artificial intelligence in updating and modifying library materials. AI technologies are increasingly being used to rewrite or adapt texts for modern audiences. While AI offers exciting possibilities for efficiency and innovation, it also raises important questions about transparency, accuracy, and historical integrity.

For instance, if an AI model rewrites a historical text to remove "outdated" language or ideas, how do we ensure that the revisions are faithful to the author's intent? How do we prevent the erasure of important historical contexts, even if they are uncomfortable? And most importantly, how do we guard against a future where AI-driven changes make it difficult—or even impossible—to access original materials?

This is not a matter of choosing between progress and preservation. It is about striking a balance. By initiating this study, we can develop thoughtful policies that respect both our heritage and our future. North Dakota's libraries have long been trusted keepers of knowledge, and it is our responsibility to ensure they remain so for generations to come.

As legislators, we have a duty to safeguard the resources that inform and educate our citizens, and to make decisions that uphold the integrity of the historical record. I believe this bill represents a step in that direction.

I ask for your support in moving this bill forward. Together, we can ensure that North Dakota's libraries remain institutions of learning, discovery, and truth, preserving the richness of our past while embracing the promise of our future.

Thank you. I stand for questions

2025 HOUSE EDUCATION

SB 2278

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee
Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

SB 2278
3/10/2025

Relating to the retention of library materials.

2:31 p.m. Chairman Heinert called the meeting to order.

Members Present: Chairman Heinert, Vice Chairman Schreiber- Beck, Representatives, Conmy, Hager, Hatlestad, Hauck, Heilman, Jonas, Longmuir, Maki, Marchall, Morton, Novak, Osowski

Discussion Topics:

- Library material
- Studies
- Appropriate reading material

2:31 p.m. Senator Boehm introduced the bill and submitted testimony. #40088

2:36 p.m. Mary Soucie, ND State Librarian, testified in favor and submitted testimony. #39647

2:43 a.m. Jerry Rostad, Vice Chancellor for Strategy and Strategic Engagement, ND University System, NDUS, testified in favor and submitted testimony. #39979

Additional written testimony:

Anita Tulp, Director, Valley City Barn County Public Library, submitted testimony in opposition. #39663

Gail Reiten, Advocacy Chair, Right to Read ND, submitted testimony in opposition. #39801

Cindy Aaser, Hazen public library, submitted testimony in opposition. #39910

2:46 p.m. Chairman Heinert closed the hearing.

Leah Kuball, Committee Clerk

TESTIMONY ON SB2278
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
MARY J. SOUCIE, STATE LIBRARIAN
MARCH 10, 2025

Chairman Heinert and Members of the House Education Committee,

For the record, I am State Librarian Mary Soucie. I am here to provide information related to SB2778 which requests that the Legislative Council consider studying the retention of library materials when a new version is published, an analysis of the impact of artificial intelligence on retention of library materials as well as the updating of published works, and the fiscal and operations impact of collection development.

If Legislative Management were to choose this study, the State Library is ready to assist with the research and the determination of the feasibility and desirability of retaining library materials. Many of the libraries maintained by state agencies already operate under a collection development policy which provides the framework for materials added to or removed from the collection. Materials are withdrawn from a collection for a variety of reasons including usage, condition, relevancy, and the availability of the material at other libraries.

The study would also require an analysis of how artificial intelligence (AI) has or will affect the retention of library materials and how library materials are being updated or altered using AI. Artificial Intelligence is a rapidly developing technology and resource, and there are several positive ways in which artificial intelligence can impact libraries. There are practical applications of AI in libraries including assisting with answering reference questions, creating FAQs, providing reader's advisory, creating marketing materials, and library cataloging.

However, there do not appear to be current applications of AI regarding the retention of library materials. Collection development policies are still the standard for adding/ removing materials. Publishers are exploring AI technologies to determine how they can best utilize the technology to improve the process and outcomes without replacing the human touch. AI is being leveraged by some publishers to speed the editing process and to translate books. AI is currently being tested for use in audiobooks by Amazon.

The Senate Education Committee amended the study to include the fiscal and operational impact of collection development at the request of the Chancellor's Office and the State Library. The study should consider the impact of retaining multiple copies of a title and how that practice fits with adopted collection development policies and best practices.

In conclusion, I acknowledge the intent of this legislation to explore the evolving landscape of library collections, particularly in the context of changing language and the influence of artificial intelligence. State Library staff are available to collaborate with the Legislative Management and provide further information or assistance as the study progresses.

Chairman Heinert and members of the committee, this concludes my testimony. I stand for any questions.

March 8, 2025

Dear Chairperson and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Anita Tulp, and I am the Director of the Valley City Barnes County Library. I am writing to you in opposition to SB 2278 and sincerely ask for a vote of "Do Not Pass."

I believe this bill if passed would be an unnecessary and wasteful use of taxpayer funds. First of all, it is not clear who will be conducting this study. If it is left in the hands of the Legislative Management Committee, where are their qualifications to implement such a study? Not one of them claims to have any connection with a library as a librarian, library board member, or even part of a Friends of the Library organization. Not one of them appears to have any education related to the Library Media and Information Science field. Will they recruit professional librarians to assist with this study? How much will that cost?

The assessment of whether an original copy of a book or resource should be kept in the library should be left up to the librarians. They know their community and patrons and can assess the need for the original copy if a new version becomes available. They have been professionally trained to maintain a collection that is relevant to today's needs while also honoring the past and looking to the future needs of their patrons.

They also know the space available in the library and can best assess the storage of such a copy if it is something they want to retain. If a book or resource does not circulate anymore, it has very little value to a library that focuses on keeping current materials available for its patrons. If they would be required to keep every old copy just in case someone may want it in the future, they just as well change the word "library" in their name to "museum." Shelving space is limited in any library and items are constantly added and removed for various reasons. Some books just plain wear out and you might not be able to replace it with a new "old" version. Some books are damaged to the extent that they may cause a health risk if moldy or dirty so would not be allowed to circulate anyway. Would we need to keep those?

Authors that do update the language and such in their books and release that new version may expect the old version to disappear. Their wishes should be honored.

It is also highly unlikely that the original version of a book would completely disappear as we all see the value of items in different ways. The books would still be available to patrons through Inter-library Loan services and most likely through digital services that focus on preserving historical documents.

I believe that AI is still very new, and we will not know the true effects of its development in written materials for a while so a study at this point would yield nothing of value.

Please vote "Do Not Pass" on SB 2278. Thank you for your time.

Testimony in Opposition to SB 2278
House Education Committee - March 10, 2025

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee, my name is Gail Reiten and I'm the advocacy chair for Right to Read ND.

Throughout my life, I've seen the power of books and libraries. As a daycare provider, I offered storytimes in my home and volunteered as a library storytime reader. I brought my own children to the Minot Public Library, checking out books for them and for myself. The library became such a large influence on our lives that my daughter grew up to be a library director.

That is why I joined Right to Read ND. Right to Read ND is a nonpartisan group of North Dakota citizens concerned about attempts to limit our access to books and materials in libraries across the state. We believe Senate Bill 2278 is part of a movement that seeks to override the First Amendment right of North Dakotans to access books and materials.

SB 2278 would waste taxpayer dollars and time on a study that would limit the ability of libraries to develop their collections with their local community in mind. It takes away local control from parents, library boards, schools, and communities and inserts the state government into the process.

We trust North Dakota library professionals to make informed decisions on what materials to order and what to weed to best serve their communities. We urge you to give SB 2278 a Do Not Pass recommendation.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

Gail Reiten
Right to Read ND, Advocacy Chair
righttoreadnd@gmail.com

SB2278

I urge you oppose the passing of SB2278. This bill is overstepping of the government. Libraries are here for their communities and the buildings have limited space in which to house materials. If every single copy of original text is supposed to be retained there will be no room for new books that are published. Maybe this is your intent so that libraries are censored on what they can add to their collections. Having to save every book with original text will censor what is bought because there will not be room for adding new materials for patrons to read or use.

Please vote NO on SB 2278.

NORTH DAKOTA
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM
ACCESS. INNOVATION. EXCELLENCE.

House Education Committee
March 10, 2025
Jerry Rostad, Vice Chancellor, NDUS
701.969.9229 | jerry.rostad@ndus.edu

Chair Heinert and members of the House Education Committee. My name is Jerry Rostad and I serve as a Vice Chancellor of the North Dakota University System (NDUS). I am submitting testimony in support of SB 2278, which calls for a legislative study on the retention of library materials. More specifically, this study will explore the feasibility and desirability of requiring libraries to retain original versions of books and written materials, especially when new editions update language to be more socially progressive, inclusive, or less offensive.

We support this study because it could explore several important questions.

First, we need to understand how any changes would affect library management and archive strategies. The study could help determine who would be responsible for enforcing any changes and how libraries would be audited for compliance.

Next, strategic goals involving inclusivity and modern educational resources might also be influenced as there could be a demand to balance preservation with contemporary relevance. Relatedly, with the rapid progression of technology and particularly artificial intelligence, the study could also evaluate how these technologies impact the updating and alteration of library materials.

Finally, it would be important to understand how the retention of multiple versions of texts might have implications for library storage, resources, and personnel. A financial impact statement could be included, too.

In conclusion, the NDUS advocates for the approval of SB 2278, with an emphasis on careful consideration of the financial and operational impacts on our institutions.

Chairman Heinert and Members of the House Education Committee, I am Keith Boehm the Senator from District 33.

I stand before you to introduce senate bill 2278 which addresses a matter of vital importance to the preservation of knowledge and history in our state: the retention of original library materials.

This bill calls for a comprehensive study to explore whether state-maintained libraries, including those in our educational institutions, should retain copies of books and written materials in their original form, even when publishers release updated versions with modernized language.

Let me begin by acknowledging a fundamental truth: language evolves, and society progresses. These are positive and necessary aspects of cultural growth. Updates to language can make texts more inclusive, relevant, and accessible to contemporary audiences. However, these updates should not come at the expense of preserving the original context in which these works were created.

Consider, for example, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain. This classic has been both lauded and criticized for its portrayal of race and its use of language that is deeply offensive by today's standards. Some modern editions of the book have replaced racially charged terms with less inflammatory language. While this can make the book more palatable to contemporary readers, it also changes the historical lens through which we understand the societal norms and prejudices of Twain's time.

Another example comes from the works of Roald Dahl. Recently, new editions of his beloved children's books, such as *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, were edited to remove language deemed insensitive. While the changes aimed to make the stories more inclusive, they sparked a global debate about censorship, historical accuracy, and the preservation of an author's original intent.

If we lose access to the original versions of these works, we risk losing a vital record of our cultural and historical evolution. These texts—unaltered and in their original form—offer us invaluable insights into the ideas, struggles, and values of the past, even when they challenge or contradict today's norms.

Furthermore, this study will examine the growing role of artificial intelligence in updating and modifying library materials. AI technologies are increasingly being used to rewrite or adapt texts for modern audiences. While AI offers exciting possibilities for efficiency and innovation, it also raises important questions about transparency, accuracy, and historical integrity.

For instance, if an AI model rewrites a historical text to remove "outdated" language or ideas, how do we ensure that the revisions are faithful to the author's intent? How do we prevent the erasure of important historical contexts, even if they are uncomfortable? And most importantly, how do we guard against a future where AI-driven changes make it difficult—or even impossible—to access original materials?

This is not a matter of choosing between progress and preservation. It is about striking a balance. By initiating this study, we can develop thoughtful policies that respect both our heritage and our future. North Dakota's libraries have long been trusted keepers of knowledge, and it is our responsibility to ensure they remain so for generations to come.

As legislators, we have a duty to safeguard the resources that inform and educate our citizens, and to make decisions that uphold the integrity of the historical record. I believe this bill represents a step in that direction.

I ask for your support in moving this bill forward. Together, we can ensure that North Dakota's libraries remain institutions of learning, discovery, and truth, preserving the richness of our past while embracing the promise of our future.

Thank you. I stand for questions

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee
Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

SB 2278
3/19/2025

Relating to the retention of library materials.

9:06 a.m. Chairman Heinert opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Heinert, Representatives, Conmy, Hager, Hatlestad, Hauck, Heilman, Jonas, Longmuir, Maki, Marchall, Morton, Novak, Osowski

Members Absent: Vice Chairman Schreiber-Beck

Discussion Topics:

- Committee action

9:07 a.m. Representative Heilman moved a Do Pass.

9:07 a.m. Representative Morton seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Pat D. Heinert	Y
Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck	A
Representative Liz Conmy	N
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	N
Representative Patrick R. Hatlestad	Y
Representative Dori Hauck	Y
Representative Matthew Heilman	Y
Representative Jim Jonas	Y
Representative Donald W. Longmuir	Y
Representative Roger A. Maki	Y
Representative Andrew Marschall	Y
Representative Desiree Morton	Y
Representative Anna S. Novak	Y
Representative Doug Osowski	Y

9:08 a.m. Motion passed 11-2-1

9:08 a.m. Representative Heilman will carry the bill.

9:08 a.m. Chairman Heinert closed the hearing.

Wyatt Armstrong for Leah Kuball, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
ENGROSSED SB 2278 (25.0846.03000)

Education Committee (Rep. Heinert, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (11 YEAS, 2 NAYS, 1 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). Engrossed SB 2278 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar.