

I am writing in opposition of SB2360. This bill violates our First Amendment rights. The First Amendment protects us against government limits on our freedom of expression. The First Amendment prevents government from keeping you from hearing or reading the words of others (even if you never speak out yourself, you have the right to receive information).

This proposed censorship of materials in public libraries will only provide less educational opportunities for people. Being exposed to materials that have the naked human body are opportunities to teach, learn and provoke conversation. As the bill reads and I interpret, this material would include human anatomy books, educational books about our bodies, books about natural processes with our bodies, etc. I remember learning about the human body, both male and female as early as 5th and 6th grades. I am not damaged by knowing about the human body from a young age and am thankful for the discussion and education. I can only imagine the message we send when we chose to ignore and censor the human body- should we be ashamed? Should we be fearful? Are we bad?

Many of these periodicals are not meant to be interpreted as pornography and the like. Exposure to this material comes down to parents being parents, educating and discussing these things with their children, teaching them to navigate society and the world. The legislature should not interfere with librarians/library board decisions about building collections based on each community's needs. Censorship in libraries will not "protect" our youth. When does the censorship stop? What about cell phones and access to the internet? Those devices and resources pose more of an issue than the books in the library. Maybe children under 18 should not be allowed to have cell phones. The internet is a more dangerous place than the library.

Concerned Citizen,

Sarah Mertz