

Senate Judiciary Committee Members

I am a long-time resident of North Dakota who was born and raised in Minot and returned to my state to raise my family 40 years ago. I am writing to express my opposition to SB 2123, which amends the current law that relates to displaying objectionable materials or performances to minors. The changes that have been made to the current law are small, but very concerning. The original law is designed to protect minors from being exposed to sexually explicit books, magazines, photographs, etc. that are publicly displayed. I have no problem with the current law as written, but your changes take out some very important words that dramatically changes the tone of the law. It now would include books that contain any depiction or written descriptions of nude or partially denuded figures rather than those that are principally made up of those depictions. You need to realize that there are written descriptions of the naked body presented in a sexual manner in the Bible, although I would guess it is not the intention of the sponsors of this bill to ban the Bible from any of these locations.

The elimination of “The above shall not be construed to include a bona fide school, college, university, museum, public library or art gallery” also seems to dramatically change the purpose of this law. Who determines which paintings, photographs or other depictions of nudity are art and which are objectionable? Who decides if a book’s written depiction of the human body is exploiting sex, lust or perversion? Is there a standard that would be followed or is this up to the individual to decide? Would students in an art history class be able to study the great works of art which depict nudity in all of its forms?

This bill, in combination with HB 1205, gets to the heart of censorship and is an infringement on our freedom and rights. The Republican Party that I grew up in was one of less governmental interference in our lives, but this, and other bills that are being proposed this session are doing the opposite. I have lived long enough to see several attempts to ban books and art and I can tell you that it doesn’t end well.

Please vote No on SB 2123.

Thank you,
Jane Hirst
Minot ND