

January 22, 2023

Greetings:

I write in opposition to SB 2123.

- North Dakota's library and education professionals continuously make decisions about which books and materials to make available to students and to the public. Selection is not the same as censorship. As noted by the National Council of Teachers of English and International Reading Association, "Whereas the goal of censorship is to remove, eliminate or bar particular materials and methods, the goal of professional guidelines is to provide criteria for selection of materials and methods."
- Creating a censorship law (as SB 2123 would do) starts us down a very slippery slope. It is impossible to strictly define what is objectionable---that is a matter of personal opinion. If this bills passes, with its vague definition of what is to be censored (materials that are offensive to some), what is to stop the next person or group from promoting additional censorship bills regarding matters that are offensive to them? Do not take the dangerous action of setting censorship precedent with this bill.
- This bill extends the reach of government far beyond our values of limited government. Please respect the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights.
- Do not dishonor our proud state by criminalizing the work of librarians. If citizens object to library material, they absolutely have the right to express their views. We should NOT, however, go anywhere near legislating censorship.

Thank you.

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