

I am writing in opposition of SB 2205. I am a librarian and parent in Fargo. I strongly support the freedom to read and the ability for all library patrons to find books suitable to their needs. This bill is an example of state censorship and would criminalize librarians for doing their jobs.

There are many different beliefs about what is appropriate for children and when. I believe the person best suited to choose what is appropriate for a child is not the government but their parent or guardian. Parents and guardians know the most about their children's emotional development and maturity and know what is best for their child.

Although the intent of this bill may have been to protect children, it would affect all patrons served by public libraries in our state. Removing any book with "a written description of nude or partially denuded figures" would impact many popular books intended for adults. The language is extremely broad and would be difficult or impossible to uphold.

As librarians, we understand there are many viewpoints held by the public we serve. We spend a considerable amount of time developing our expertise, through education and professional development. This allows us to select a broad swath of materials that fit different viewpoints which library patrons can then choose to read if it is appropriate for them. It is this freedom to choose that has been central to American libraries since their inception. It forms an important part of ensuring we have an informed electorate as the foundation of our democracy.

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