

Hello ND Senate Judiciary Committee,

I would like to express to you my opposition to Senate Bill 2123. The bill appears to me to be almost entirely retaliatory in nature, and is likely in response to the Dickinson Valley City Public Library Boards' decision to not ban/remove a book from their shelves last year. The current wording is very detrimental to libraries and the freedom of speech and information that they provide to their communities.

My primary issue regarding the bill is that it could open the door to more information censorship. Learning from what has happened in the world these last several years, it should not be any government's goal to further restrict access to information, even if it's information that one might find objectionable. Freedom of information is meant to be freedom of all information, not just what a select few determine it to be.

Additionally, I do not know of a single library or library board within the state that doesn't already have a process for patrons to request to have questionable materials to be removed. This bill appears to be an attempt to override what a locally elected/appointed library board decides. I'm a firm believer that whenever possible, it is best to limit or remove government overreach where none is needed.

Finally, the bill does not include any section that would allow for the library to argue to keep and/or maintain the challenged item within their current collection. This ultimately could lead to nearly any romance book or any piece of media with romance as a sub-plot to being accused and forcefully removed without due process. As it is worded, there is not even a burden of proof requirement for the accuser to prove that a book should be considered indecent and therefore removed. It just mandates that if anyone requests for a book to be removed and uses the reason that it's indecent, that it must then be removed or face class B misdemeanor charges, period.

As a fellow resident, voter, and library supporter of North Dakota, I hope that you consider and take my comments into consideration, and to vote "no" to its passage or referral.

Thank you for your time,  
Dylan Gonser  
1110 Walnut ST.  
Grand Forks, ND 58201