

*Senate Judiciary Committee on SB 2123*

I do not believe that there is any logical purpose to the passing of this bill regarding displaying objectionable materials or performances. Never have I been concerned with any images that have been publicly displayed to youth (or adults) in North Dakota, these concerns seem to be rooted in fear and not reality. The wording of the law is also increasingly vague, which is always of great concern to me. This leaves a huge range of interpretations which generally allows for overuse and misuse of the law.

There are many classic, historical examples of media displaying verbal and visual nudity or other such acts and images. That does not mean all of these examples are created to exploit sex or perversion. However, the mere use of these topics could be construed to fit a single person's agenda to have it removed. Tasteful art is up to the interpreter, and we should that interpreter be the parents of a minor viewer, or an adult viewer themselves. The government should never be allowed to make these decisions.

The removal of line 2.e. is especially concerning. By striking the line which includes art galleries, museums, and public universities, it's been made quite clear this is not just about children, as universities are not generally a space for minors to frequent. Artistic expression is also of very great concern to me, as my degree is a Bachelor of Arts. We studied centuries worth of imagery that contained nudity and we also drew from live, nude models. Personal exemption from these events has always been a personal choice. Viewership at a gallery is moderated by a curator and the viewer themselves. The government has no place in these choices.

Government-controlled censorship is a very dangerous road. There are countless stories regarding this topic, maybe starting with the book 1984. No government should be dictating the media we consume, no good ever comes of this. If your motives to pass this bill are rooted in religion, let's not forget the extended use of nudity and sex used throughout the Christian Holy Bible. My interpretation, based on the wording of this law, is that the display of the Bible would most definitely be banned according to this law. Focus your time on the much more pressing issues we face, this law is a waste.

Sincerely,

Kristin Michels

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