

Chairman Larson and members of the North Dakota Senate Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to express my opinion as a citizen of Valley City, North Dakota, a former professional librarian, educator, and mother of a now grown son.

Please do not pass SB 2123. It is completely unnecessary legislation.

SB 2123 is an example of government overreach into the lives of the citizens of North Dakota.

Under the guise of “protecting minors,” with no exceptions allowed for schools, colleges universities, museums, public libraries, nor or art galleries, it would deprive everyone of access to many cultural works, art, and even important medical information.

If it were truly about “protecting minors” why does it only address nudity? Images and descriptions of violence are far more prevalent and potentially harmful when viewed by children.

Printed texts on sexual education will inevitably contain images or descriptions that when taken out of context could be construed as pornographic. Images from a health text on various diseases or books with information on breastfeeding, when taken out of context, could be called pornographic by some people. This bill would even prohibit the medical pamphlets available in health care settings.

SB 2123 is demanding the government enforce a narrowly defined view of morality to appease a small segment of the population that would have the state take away the rights and responsibility of parents to monitor and choose what their children see and read.

In state that openly promotes individual freedoms, I find it abhorrent that our state legislators are advocating for this type of censorship.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Victoria M. Hammel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'V' and 'H'.

Victoria M. Hammel
January 23, 2023