

Members of the Senate Judiciary, thank you for allowing me to speak and taking the time to listen. For the record, my name is Autumn Richard, from Lefor North Dakota, and I am writing in favor of Senate Bill 2360.

This bill is a necessity, along with several other bills that have been presented recently, in order to preserve the integrity of North Dakota values. I can personally attest to the necessity of this bill. The ODIN cataloging system that is used by my library, Dickinson Public Library, along with every other library in the state, allows for children to electronically access any book within the system. This means that a book, such as 365 Sexual Positions (which is in my library) in the adult section, can be checked out by a child of any age; there is nothing limiting this child. Also, if a child goes to the search engine and types in a key word, such as sex, they will be met with a plethora of books, ranging from the children's section to adult reading, from their library to all other libraries within the state, at their fingertips.

In a library board meeting, the Dickinson library director, stated to me that if a twelve year old child wants to check out an adult book, there is nothing within the system, either physically or electronically, that will stop them.

I do not understand how the libraries acknowledge the necessity of censoring internet browsing, but will not provide the same security in literature. If a child can read a book that speaks about masturbation, rimming or golden showers and the library protects that right, why can't that child see it visually on the computer system? If one source is considered inappropriate, why not the other? Clearly, a minor learning about such terms is inappropriate on both sources, and this is why this topic has reached nationwide concern.

I do believe that our state needs to clearly define what is considered 'obscene' for minors; there should be no gray area in this so that when a complaint is voiced, there is no room for discussion. Sexually explicit vocabulary as well as sexually graphic pictures should not be available for minors under the age of 18. Gender identity/sexual identity or sex classification is not material for minors, particularly for children 12 and under; there is a multitude of scientific data stating the damage of this information to a developing mind.

North Dakota is not the only state attempting to protect their youth's mental health and well being; Texas HB1655 was filed in January of this year, other bills such as Oklahoma HB2002, SB95 and SB1017, as well as Virginia SB1463, Louisiana SB7 and West Virginia SB1017 have all been introduced and all have the same common goal, to protect children from harmful information.

This concludes my testimony and I respectfully request a do pass recommendation from this committee. Thank you for your time.