



Phone 701-852-5388
Toll Free 1-800-932-8932

PO Box 5005
Minot, ND 58702
225 3rd St. SE
Minot, ND 58701

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Chairman Roers and the Members of the Senate State and Local Government Committee,

My name is Kerriane Boetcher, and I am the Ward County Public Library Director in Minot, North Dakota. I am asking you to support HB 1254 and joining my fellow librarians in asking you to do so.

While most of our public libraries in the state are members of North Dakota Library2Go, our local Overdrive Consortium (Libby), many of our communities do not have access to these materials. This collection consists of over 65,000 eBooks, eAudiobooks, and magazines.

We also have North Dakota citizens who live in communities where their library is run by volunteers and open only for limited hours, or they do not have a local library at all. I grew up in one of those communities. My hometown did not have a local library other than the small "library" at the local café, which was short on children's materials. We were able to have the county bookmobile come once every two weeks throughout the year, and then we shared a school librarian with a close town.

Access to the State Library through a State Library card will open up resources and opportunities for many North Dakotans. I was fortunate enough to have a school librarian who helped me get a state library card as a young child in a small town. I am forever thankful to her for opening up a whole realm of information that I didn't even know existed.

Our small communities are restricted in their access by the challenges of their local libraries, such as staffing, limited hours, and restricted budgets. If they can access the State Library's resources, they will be able to access that realm of information just as I was as a child.

Libraries are vital to North Dakota, and the State Library is an essential part of our network, which should be available to all North Dakotans. Please support libraries in North Dakota and vote in favor of HB 1254 as proposed.

Respectfully,

Kerriane Boetcher
Library Director

Ward County Public Library kboetcher@wardnd.gov
701-857-6471