

HB 1205 Do Not Pass

Good morning. My name is Wendy Wendt and as a North Dakota citizen, a mother, a lifelong learner, and a library director, I am asking you to vote "Do not pass" on HB 1205.

Throughout my life, I have turned to the public library for information and entertainment. I was an awkward child and teenager who escaped into books for friendship and adventure with Nancy Drew and Laura Ingalls.

I was also full of lots of questions. I learned about the birds and the bees from library books, which my Mother encouraged me to check out from my public library. Yes, they were children's books and teen books that had graphic drawings of the male and female bodies and descriptions of how the sex act worked. My questions were answered and the books helped me prepare for adulthood.

I also learned about drugs, suicide, abuse, and much more through books. Books expanded my worldview and my street smarts. Go Ask Alice deeply moved me and made me aware of the dangers of drugs and the horrors of rape. Flowers in the Attic taught me about child abuse and incest. Real things that happen to real children who may think they are the only person in the world these things happen to. Children who may have no one they trust to talk to. Children who may come to believe that the only way out of the situation they're in is suicide.

Not every child comes from a supportive home where an adult can answer their questions. In your efforts to protect some children, this bill in turn endangers other children who may be unable to find books that answer their questions about themselves and about life.

Not only does this proposed bill limit children's and teen's access to information, it limits adult access to materials that adults have the right to access. Children have access to the entire library therefore this bill affects every area of the library. It takes away my freedom to read and view and it takes away your right. Needlessly. Please remember that freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Vote 'Do Not Pass" on HB 1205 for my freedom and yours.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Wendy Wendt