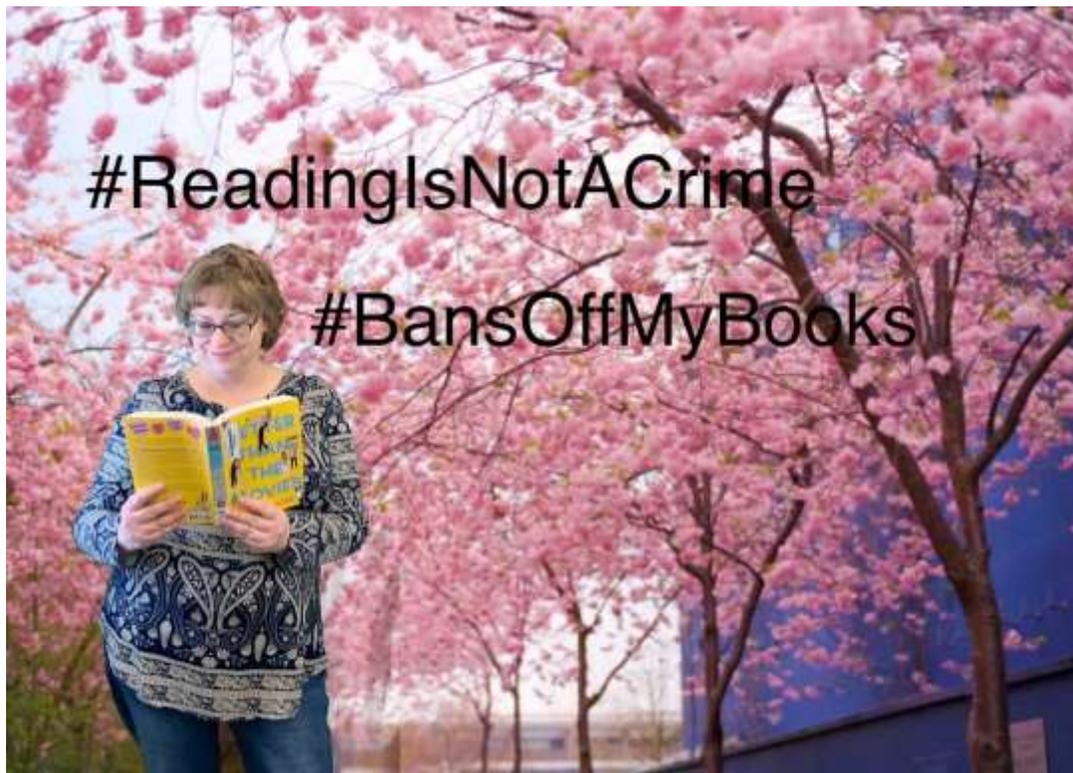


A few months back, I was meandering around my Teen area, shelving a few books, generally tidying up when a young man appeared. "Casey" was very distressed after school. I asked him if he was ok. Sometimes, school is tough for a 9th grader. He told me that school was fine today but that his little sister was dying. I was immediately very concerned and said I was very sorry to hear that. I asked what was wrong as I had seen her just days ago and she had been fine. Casey told me "She's bleeding into the toilet and she can't walk properly." I said "I see, did your parents tell you she was unwell?" "No, they won't talk at all, just look sad and worry." I asked Casey if it was possible his sister was having a period and he looked at me blankly and said "What's that?" I found a teen puberty book to explain his sister's symptoms to him. The look of relief on his face was miraculous to see. This poor teenager had spent a whole weekend and a school day worried to death his little sister was DYING because his mom and dad were too embarrassed to explain a simple biological process to him! Appropriate puberty information for both sexes is crucial to teen development and family ties. Anguish over a loved one's demise is no way for a teen to spend a weekend or a school day and by supplying our teens with correct information, we make their lives better.

Pass HB 1205 and you will end up taking away sex education books because anyone can object to anything, leaving the library with no recourse. As we've seen above, even kids who attend public school might not understand everything they need to know about puberty WHEN they need it. Libraries provide trusted resources when our young people need them. Without well stocked libraries, teens will suffer, or turn to less reliable sources like their friends or dodgy Internet sites. This is not in North Dakota's best interests.



Pam Carswell, Teen Librarian, Mother, READER of books with WORDS!