

Dear Kansas House Education Committee,

As an educator and a life-long Kansan, I would like to strongly voice my opposition to House Bill 2700 that will negatively impact our students, especially in relation to their reading skills, and put a significant drain on school budgets in order to implement a library materials ratings system.. The system outlined in your bill will create unnecessary work for all those working to improve reading, from unpaid library volunteers to the teachers, librarians, district officials and even those in the Department of Education. The bill raises several questions:

1. **LACK OF A SCHOOL LIBRARIAN:** Given that so many districts have cut school librarians, many due to budget cuts 12-15 years ago, who will be in charge of disseminating the new process, training other educators, etc., on the rating system when there is no school librarian?
2. **COST:** Who is going to pay for all of the manpower that is necessary to implement a rating system? All districts are already strapped for money, especially connected to library funding.
3. **SPECIFICS OF THE RATING SYSTEM:** Who exactly determines what the rating system is, who enforces it, and how is it exactly implemented? Most importantly, what exactly is going to be rated? There are dozens of questions surrounding this. The bill is much too vague..
4. **MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE:** The one thing the bill is very clear on is WHO makes up the state task force. While there is one Kansas Association of School Librarians member on the task force, who in that organization gets to determine which member? Why is a task force for rating School Library Materials only required to have one member that is a school librarian or has expertise in this field?
5. **LOCAL CONTROL:** Why should this be at the state level? If a district wants to implement a ratings system, couldn't they create a district Task Force if their constituents desire one?
6. **PARENT CONTROL:** Since parents already are able to determine what their child reads, what is the point of this bill? Parents, teachers and librarians already have resources to provide ratings — Common Sense Media is used with parent input; Lexile reading levels are the standard in education; and a parent can always work with educators in their child's school.

Even though I write this as a private citizen, I want to maintain full transparency. I am a certified library media specialist in a Shawnee Mission high school. I have worked with parents directly who have concerns about books for their own child and am happy to accommodate a parent's request. Unlike required reading for a class, the library allows students to read a different book than their classmates. While you get to decide what library book your child can read, should you be able to decide what my child can or cannot read? We all want our children to succeed in school and develop a love for reading. This bill would do the opposite as librarians and teachers would spend more time on the ratings instead of focusing on finding a book that fits each student. Librarians already have training and numerous tools to determine appropriateness, level and interest. We do not need one that is mandated. Districts vary widely across our state, but every librarian is like me. We are all just trying to help students become life-long readers. Please do not put one more obstacle in our way.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer questions or provide more details.

Sherri Crawford, Lawrence, Kansas