

My name is Gretchen Caserotti and I'm the library director of the Meridian Library District and I'm here today asking you to hold your vote until HB194 has had sufficient time for review particularly on the fiscal impacts for smaller and rural libraries in the state. As a Library Director who went through the process of installing filters on the entire library network only a few years back I can assure you the direct and indirect costs are substantially higher than this bill's fiscal note ^{states} assures and do not end with a one-time installation. For the rural and smaller libraries in the state, even \$2,500 can have a ~~decidedly terrible~~ ^{significantly negative} impact on their overall budget forcing them to reallocate critical funds away from important public services and programs or worse yet, possibly remove access altogether from a lack of funds or technical skills on staff to implement such devices. I have deeply held beliefs that information should be freely accessed and that the rules of public decency and decorum ~~are what~~ ^{are what} can successfully be enforced in the public space without costly and imperfect filters.

Filtering programs function in a fairly simple way. Control lists work by either word or site blocking. Only limited staff is available to review sites, focusing almost exclusively on those in English and making subjective judgments about sites that only courts can determine are illegal. Blocking categories do not match a library's selection criteria, nor are they based on the expertise of professional librarians. Decisions about what users may view are relegated to companies with no public accountability.

While I certainly understand the intent of this bill to attempt to protect minors, it is poorly researched and is ultimately an unfunded mandate.

Since moving here in 2013 I have enjoyed visiting and getting to know the libraries from the more rural areas of our beautiful state. It is truly humbling to see such tiny, underfunded public institutions providing such valuable and needed resources in areas with few community places. I have seen first-hand how few staff are found in these small libraries and from my position working with IT staff in the LYNX consortium, I am aware of how many, even here in the Treasure Valley, have lower proficiency and little IT support (even City libraries) to solve and troubleshoot even the simplest problems such as the orientation of the names on receipt printed hold slips. Adding a new requirement to add filters for these libraries with budgets under \$100,000 a year would make providing internet services impossible without additional funding and IT support.

The perception that pornographic materials are a common problem in public libraries is frankly untrue. Spend time in our libraries and I know you'll see an active learning center, a community center where public decency and civility is expected and enforced. Even WITHOUT filters in place. In my 6 years here in Meridian I can count the number

of times I have suspended a patron's privileges for viewing obscene materials on one hand.

My 8 year old son told me about the older 4th & 5th grade kids on the bus that showed him the video of how babies were made. As much as we want to protect our kids and control the content they are exposed to, at the end of the day, how we ACT and respond when socially inappropriate things happen is what matters. Requiring libraries to install and maintain expensive filtering equipment is NOT going to prevent someone who wants to view that type of material in any place (not just a public library). But what WILL happen is that an employee of the library will stop the behavior and issue a consequence to a violator of library policy which is the revocation of library privileges for a period of time. Because library staff are committed to upholding the principles of access and our social mores for public decency and being a safe place for children and families.

I ask you to not pass this bill as written and allow for the Idaho Library Community to work with legislators to conduct due diligence in ensuring adequate funding for smaller/rural libraries and the technical support is in place before passing such a measure. No one here would argue that we should ALLOW these behaviors to happen in our public libraries. Indeed, we are swift to address and discipline such behaviors, **which** are infrequent. But we DO argue that legislation that impacts our state's poor, rural, smaller libraries, should be done with great care, thought, and support, NOT unfunded mandates.

Thank you for your time. I would stand for any questions from the Committee.

(test ran just slightly over 5 minutes)

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