

# Amazon: NC bid to track taxes violates free speech

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(AP) -- Online retailer Amazon.com says it's taking a stand for free speech by fighting an effort by North Carolina tax authorities to identify buyers.

The company says in a federal lawsuit filed in Seattle that North Carolina tax collectors have demanded information identifying the buyers of nearly 50 million books, movies, CDs and other items since 2003.

A spokeswoman for the state Revenue Department had no immediate comment Tuesday. Revenue Secretary Kenneth Lay was named in the lawsuit but was not immediately available for comment.

North Carolina requires residents to pay taxes on online items if they would pay sales tax in a store.

Amazon.com Inc. says revealing buyers' names would harm customers who may have bought controversial books or movies and would diminish future sales.

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