

HB 1511
Senate Judiciary Committee
69th Legislative Session

Chair Larson and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, my name is Dr. Erica Hofland. I am a practicing Obstetrician Gynecologist in Dickinson and I am writing asking this committee to oppose HB 1511.

This bill intends to have physicians who self-identify as obstetric providers participate in an educational session the Board of Medicine creates (which will be approved by the North Dakota Attorney General) in order to obtain and maintain licensure to practice medicine.

There are several concerns with this bill. The first of these concerns is that laws regarding pregnancy termination are frequently contested, in litigation, or otherwise in varied states of implementation. Having an accurate and meaningful educational program on termination of pregnancy laws in North Dakota seems unlikely. Also, while the bill does provide an appropriation for an initial educational program it does not account for additional updates that would likely need to be created. The cost for such a project would likely expand overtime. This is a poor utilization of resources.

The second concern is in regards to the licensure itself. A North Dakota Board of Medicine license is renewed every other year at the time of an applicant's birthday. It is likely that a change in law could happen in between these renewal dates. Are applicants going to need to renew at times in between the typical cycle in order to maintain the ability to practice? This would be disruptive not only to physicians but one would assume to the Board of Medicine itself. This also would incur an additional cost to practicing physicians as there is a fee associated with a renewal of a license.

Lastly, if the intention of this bill is truly to educate providers on North Dakota Law, limiting this material to those who self-identify as practicing obstetrics seems inappropriate. Early pregnancy, when most terminations occur, is a time when women will access care from Family Medicine providers, Radiologists, Emergency Room Physicians, Anesthesiologists, and truly almost every other specialty. Care of pregnant women is also not limited to physicians. Nurses and nurse practitioners provide a significant amount of care to patients within the state of North Dakota including pregnant patients. These providers are being overlooked by this bill.

With the concerns noted above it seems the most appropriate action would be that information regarding termination laws in North Dakota, whether this be videos, documents, or other media, be held on a Department of Health, Attorney General, or other like website for all to view and access. Having this information tied to the North Dakota Board of Medicine and Licensure seems ineffectual, inappropriate, and costly.

I strongly urge this committee to submit a Do Not Pass recommendation on HB 1511. I would be happy to provide any other information this Committee requires.

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