

Dr. Shannon Bradley

Testimony in Opposition to HB 1511

Senate Judiciary Committee

March 17, 2025

Chair Larson, members of the Judiciary Committee.

My name is Shannon Bradley, M.D. I am a Mayo Clinic-trained Obstetrician/Gynecologist who has been practicing in North Dakota for over 25 years.

I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill 1511. This bill, which mandates "education" for physicians regarding North Dakota's existing abortion law, is unnecessary, extreme, and politically contrived. I am unsure what problem this bill seeks to solve. The difficulty obstetricians in ND have with understanding the existing abortion law exists because of the lack of clarity in the law, not because of a lack of education or awareness of it on the part of obstetricians. It is already part of our job here in this state to know the law and implying that we don't is offensive.

The law causes confusion for doctors who are in emergency situations with patients. While I am not part of the lawsuit filed to overturn the State's abortion law, I have personally seen the danger it is putting patients in. Just three months ago I was consulted by another physician who had a patient who was septic and 15 weeks pregnant. A heartbeat was present, and the doctor was unsure about what treatment would be permissible to render under the law, which could charge them with a FELONY offense for trying to take care of their very sick patient. These problems are not caused by a lack of education by the physician. They are caused by legal problems with the law that was passed. Doctors across the State are struggling with having to consult one another about whether they'll find themselves in legal trouble when their focus should be exclusively on rendering the most appropriate medical care to the patient they are treating. We are doctors, not lawyers.

Additionally, House Bill 1511 seeks to allocate \$50,000 from the state treasury to develop an instructional course. This is a ridiculous waste of taxpayer funds for redundant education to licensed physicians. The bill stipulates that the course must be developed by an individual or organization that includes a physician with at least 25 years of experience in obstetrics within the state. Not one aspect of medicine requires 25 years of experience in any capacity. There is no surgery, procedure, disease knowledge, medication knowledge or any part of practicing medicine that requires 25 years' experience. The addition of this stipulation borders on the absurd and is clearly contrived for the agenda of one individual retired physician at the expense of an entire profession.

Obstetricians in North Dakota are fully aware of the current abortion laws. When it is 3 am and we are in the hospital trying to save the life of a septic pregnant patient, you can be fully assured that we know this law better than anyone in the state. We also know it is an impediment to us focusing on doing our job and giving pregnant patients the care they deserve.

Lawmakers should not spend taxpayer money on unnecessary educational requirements for already educated physicians to benefit the political agenda of a small group of people. Obstetricians fully understand the ND abortion laws.

I urge you to vote against HB1511 and pursue solutions that protect patients and keep Obstetricians practicing in our state.

Shannon Bradley, M.D.