



Kristie Wolff – Executive Director, North Dakota Women’s Network
Opposition HB 1313
North Dakota House Human Services Committee

Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee, my name is Kristie Wolff, I am the Executive Director of the North Dakota Women’s Network.

North Dakota Women’s Network is a local non-profit with members from across the state. Based on our mission to improve the lives of women in North Dakota, I am writing today in Opposition to HB 1313.

HIPPA outlines that what happens during a woman’s pregnancy is between her and her medical practitioner. HB 1313 provides no guidance for physicians about what constitutes a sufficient threat to a pregnant person’s life, which could hinder quick implementation of life-saving care to their patients. This bill endangers women’s health and lives by interfering with a doctor’s ability to provide safe reproductive health care including treatment for miscarriages and ectopic pregnancies.

Miscarriage is the most common type of pregnancy loss. According to the March of Dimes, for women who know they are pregnant, about 10 to 15 percent end in miscarriage. Most miscarriages happen in the first trimester before the 12th week of pregnancy. Miscarriage in the second trimester (between 13 and 19 weeks) happens in 1 to 5 percent of pregnancies. A woman experiencing a miscarriage may need emergency treatment to prevent infection, serious damage to her health, or to save her life. This legislation would effectively tie doctors’ hands rather than allowing them to treat their patient without fear of prosecution.

Individuals who suffer miscarriages may be discouraged from seeking necessary medical care out of fear that they will not be believed. If a woman’s pregnancy ended via miscarriage, the woman may be asked to prove she miscarried. She could be subjected to criminal investigations and the threat of severe criminal penalties.

According to the American Academy of Family Physicians ectopic pregnancies occur in about 1 out of every 50 pregnancies. A woman who suffers from an ectopic pregnancy must be treated by a medical professional and have the embryo removed. Under HB 1313 the medical practitioner would be charged with murder.

The bill would also criminalize “a person that intentionally or knowingly aids, abets, facilitates, solicits, or incites another person to commit an abortion” and would make it a class C felony. The vagueness of the bill means any of the following could be arrested:

- An Uber or taxi driver;
- A clergy member counseling their parishioner;
- A receptionist who checks an individual in for their appointment;
- A librarian who helps a person use a public computer; or
- A friend or family member who provides childcare or gas money.

Thousands of women lost their lives to unsafe abortions before Roe. Since the legalization of abortion, it has become one of the safest medical practices in the United States. Women were having abortions in the United States long before the Supreme Court legalized the practice in Roe v. Wade. The difference is that before Roe, in states that banned the procedure, women were receiving illegal, oftentimes unsafe abortions that could put their health, lives, and families in jeopardy.

This policy is extreme and unconstitutional. Passage of the bill would immediately open the door to litigation, taking resources from North Dakota that could be devoted to critical issues facing the state, including addressing needs from the COVID-19 pandemic.

HB 1313 undermines the ability of women and families to make personal and private decisions and puts these decisions in the hands of the government. Therefore, I am asking this committee to give a DO NOT PASS recommendation to HB 1313.

Thank you,

Kristie Wolff

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