

## Chairwoman Diane Larson and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee –

My name is Sierra Heitkamp and I am the Legislative Director for North Dakota Right to Life. I am testifying today to represent the interests of our 3700 members across the state of North Dakota.

Since the overturn of Roe V. Wade on June 24, 2022, there have been many questions regarding what this means for women and families who find themselves in unplanned pregnancies in North Dakota. At North Dakota Right to Life, we questioned ourselves as to how our vision and goals may have to evolve moving forward to adequately protect those most vulnerable from conception to natural death.

After many conversations, the answer became clear – not only will we continue our work in protecting life at all stages, but we also want to back legislation that educates our citizens and encourages life. A woman or family who finds themselves with an unplanned pregnancy should never feel that abortion is their only option to achieve a successful, happy life.

Our organization has heard personal testimony from those who have reached out to us about their own stories. Stories where young women found themselves in unplanned pregnancy and they were forced by their partner or family member to terminate the pregnancy as this would be and “easy” solution. Today I ask for your support on HB 1171 to protect those most vulnerable from conception to natural death. Not only does this include the human life created in an unplanned pregnancy but also the life and safety of the mother involved.

I ask this committee today for a **Do Pass Recommendation on HB 1171** in order to protect mothers facing unplanned pregnancies as we continue to promote and encourage life at all stages.

Thank you for your time today and I am available by phone or email to answer any questions you may have.



Sincerely,

*Sierra M Heitkamp*

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**NDRL Legislative Director**