

**Testimony of Tammi Kromenaker  
Director of Red River Women’s Clinic  
In Opposition to Senate Bill 2150  
January 16, 2023**

Dear members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 2150 (“S.B. 2150”). My name is Tammi Kromenaker, and I am the Director of Red River Women’s Clinic. We have provided safe abortion care services to North Dakotans for over 20 years. We are members in good standing of the National Abortion Federation and maintain the highest quality standards for our practice. We are now providing abortion care in Moorhead. Our mission is to not only provide medically safe reproductive health services, but to also provide those services in an emotionally supportive environment. I strongly oppose S.B. 2150.

Every person should be able to make their own decisions about their health and their bodies, including decisions about abortion. No one should have their most personal medical decisions controlled by politicians. Yet, since the recent Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, total bans on abortion based in politics, not healthcare, have created a public health crisis.<sup>1</sup> Abortion bans acutely and most directly harm those who already struggle to access healthcare, including people of color and low-income people. This is especially true here, where even maternal health care is not available for all North Dakotans. In fact, nearly 19% of women in North Dakota live in “maternal healthcare deserts,” where dependable access to prenatal care is inaccessible.<sup>2</sup>

Pregnancy is not a neutral state—it is physically and emotionally challenging—and for many North Dakotans, it can be life threatening. Carrying a pregnancy to term is approximately 33 times riskier than having an abortion.<sup>3</sup> In fact, in the United States, the mortality rate associated with childbirth is approximately 14 times higher than that associated with abortion.<sup>4</sup> People who are turned away from receiving abortion care, experience an increase in household poverty that can last at least four years, compared to those who are able to access abortion services.<sup>5</sup> By banning

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<sup>1</sup> Center for American Progress, *Abortion Bans Will Result in More Women Dying* (Nov. 2, 2022) <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/abortion-bans-will-result-in-more-women-dying/>. “A woman in Wisconsin experiencing a miscarriage was turned away from the hospital and sent home to bleed without medical supervision. In Arizona, a 14-year-old, caught in the crosshairs of abortion restrictions, was denied medically indicated medication she had taken for years...” *Id.*

<sup>2</sup> *N. D. is the #6 State with the Most People Living in Maternal Health Care Deserts*, STACKER (Oct. 29, 2021), <https://stacker.com/north-dakota/north-dakota-6-state-most-people-living-maternal-health-care-deserts>.

<sup>3</sup> Lisa Marshall, *Study: Banning Abortion Would Boost Maternal Mortality by Double-Digits*, CU BOULDER TODAY, UNIV. OF COLO. BOULDER (Sep. 8, 2021), <https://www.colorado.edu/today/2021/09/08/study-banning-abortion-would-boost-maternal-mortality-double-digits>.

<sup>4</sup> *Increasing Access to Abortion*, AM. COLL. OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNECOLOGISTS (Dec. 2020), <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2020/12/increasing-access-to-abortion>.

<sup>5</sup> *Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health, The Harms of Denying a Woman a Wanted Abortion Findings from the Turnaway Study*, UNIV. OF CAL. S.F. (Apr. 16, 2020) [https://www.ansirh.org/sites/default/files/publications/files/the\\_harms\\_of\\_denying\\_a\\_woman\\_a\\_wanted\\_abortion\\_4-16-2020.pdf](https://www.ansirh.org/sites/default/files/publications/files/the_harms_of_denying_a_woman_a_wanted_abortion_4-16-2020.pdf).

abortion and forcing North Dakotans to give birth, the state is denying our communities the ability to live safe and healthy lives and thrive.

We know that when people are denied abortions, they are less likely to have enough money to cover basic expenses and less likely to leave abusive partners.<sup>6</sup> They are more likely to live in poverty, and less likely to set aspirational life plans for the coming year.<sup>7</sup> Their existing children show worse child development.<sup>8</sup> People who accessed abortion care, on the other hand, are more likely to be financially stable, more likely to raise children under stable conditions, and more likely to have a wanted child later.<sup>9</sup> A study found that 95% of people who obtained an abortion said that it was the right decision and expressed no regret.<sup>10</sup>

Access to abortion care is essential to the social and economic participation of all North Dakotans and it is vital that the right to reproductive autonomy and self-determination is not infringed by this abortion ban. The harm done by S.B. 2150 will fall most heavily on already marginalized communities, including people of color, low-income people, and people in rural areas. The Legislature should be focused on policies that will serve all North Dakotans, instead of passing extreme abortion bans.

**For these reasons, I strongly oppose S.B. 2150 and ask you to vote no on this bill.** Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or would like further information.

Sincerely,



Tammi Kromenaker

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<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health, *The Turnaway Study*, Univ. of Cal. S.F. (Dec. 2022) <https://www.ansirh.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/turnawaystudyannotatedbibliography122122.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health, *The Harms of Denying a Woman a Wanted Abortion Findings from the Turnaway Study*, UNIV. OF CAL. S.F. (Apr. 16, 2020) [https://www.ansirh.org/sites/default/files/publications/files/the\\_harms\\_of\\_denying\\_a\\_woman\\_a\\_wanted\\_abortion\\_4-16-2020.pdf](https://www.ansirh.org/sites/default/files/publications/files/the_harms_of_denying_a_woman_a_wanted_abortion_4-16-2020.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health, *The Harms of Denying a Woman a Wanted Abortion Findings from the Turnaway Study*, UNIV. OF CAL. S.F. (Apr. 16, 2020) [https://www.ansirh.org/sites/default/files/publications/files/the\\_harms\\_of\\_denying\\_a\\_woman\\_a\\_wanted\\_abortion\\_4-16-2020.pdf](https://www.ansirh.org/sites/default/files/publications/files/the_harms_of_denying_a_woman_a_wanted_abortion_4-16-2020.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health, *The Turnaway Study*, Univ. of Cal. S.F. <https://www.ansirh.org/research/ongoing/turnaway-study> (last accessed Jan. 15, 2023).