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69th Legislative Assembly (2025-27)
Representative Lori Vanwinkle
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 127
Bismarck, ND 58505-0599

Re: Opposition of HB1373

Dear Representative Vanwinkle,

My name is Megan O'Neil and I live in West Fargo, ND with my husband and two children – two children we would not be able to have without the assistance of reproductive medicine here in North Dakota.

During our journey to grow our family, we pursued IUI (intrauterine insemination) and were fortunate to welcome our son. When we decided to try for a second child, several additional IUI attempts were unsuccessful. Ultimately, we were advised that IVF (in vitro fertilization) would give us the best chance for another baby.

While IVF is often described as a mainstream option, it's rarely discussed how complex and uncertain the process can be. Through our experience, I learned that IVF is, in many ways, a numbers game where each step reduces the likelihood of success. Let me share an example:

By the time we pursued IVF, I was 36 years old. In a typical IVF cycle for a healthy woman my age, about 13 eggs might be retrieved through an intensive medical procedure involving medications, professionals, and anesthesia. Of those 13 eggs:

- About half (6–7) may successfully fertilize.
- Half of the fertilized eggs (3–4) might grow into blastocysts.
- After genetic testing, about half of the blastocysts (1–2) are viable embryos.

From there, the remaining embryos must survive freezing, thawing, and implantation. And even with a successful transfer, there's no guarantee of a full-term pregnancy.

This brings me to House Bill 1373. This bill aims to redefine personhood at the fertilization stage, which fundamentally misunderstands the science of human reproduction. Fertilization is just the first step in a lengthy, complex process. By focusing on this early stage, the bill ignores the biological realities of embryo development and viability. Additionally, it is scientifically inaccurate to equate fertilized eggs—many of which will not progress into viable embryos—with living, fully developed humans.

As someone who has lived through the challenges of infertility, I urge you to consider the profound consequences of passing HB 1373. This bill would not only disregard the science but also jeopardize the reproductive options and choices of families like mine.

For these reasons, I strongly oppose the passage of HB 1373.

Respectfully,



Megan O'Neil