

**House Bill 1373**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Human Services Committee**

Chairman Ruby and members of the House Human Services Committee, we are Michael and Stacey Gussiaas of rural New Rockford. We are submitting this written testimony in opposition to certain language included in HB1373, more specifically: “terms relate to the offenses of murder and assault and civil actions for death caused by wrongful acts” and “unborn child” means an individual living human child before birth from the beginning of biological development at the moment of fertilization upon the fusion of a human spermatozoon with a human ovum.’ This language signals a direct statement that In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) should no longer be allowed.

We have recently come to know firsthand how modern medical treatments, in particular, IVF, can positively impact a married couple’s life. Not all married individuals desire to become a parent, but for those who have anticipated this as a part of their life, nothing can feel more devastating, heartbreaking and even straining on a marriage than the inability to conceive.

The willingness of married couples to seek out the expertise of fertilization clinics cannot be an easy decision, feeling that one or the other is to blame for the inability to procreate. IVF offers those seeking to grow a family of their own bloodline an opportunity to become ecstatic and share together the love and appreciation for a life they have created together, just as they would through a natural conception if possible.

We personally know eight children who have been conceived into this world through IVF; their parents would not take back the opportunity to do it all over again. The sadness, heartache and depression that can fill one’s spirit and mind can be

alleviated by given the opportunity to seek out fertilization treatments, and as a last resort, IVF treatment. The wording of this bill will remove all hope and promise for those choosing to become parents as no provider will take on or should be expected to take on the risk of assuming criminal negligence as the result of an embryonic death.

If HB1373 is approved with the current language, the IVF treatment centers will be paralyzed in providing their expertise and proven medical procedure to those longing to become parents, because of the risk associated should a fertilized egg discontinue to grow subjecting the provider to any criminal negligence laws. How is this different than a mother who might experience a heart-wrenching miscarriage? The fertilized egg dies as well only within the womb; are we to say the mother wasn't appropriately taking care of her body and her unborn child - absolutely not! Unfortunately, it is a natural occurring process that sometimes happens. The mere thought of making a medical provider out to be a killer is wrong! The mere thought of taking away a proven scientific treatment is wrong!

Two of our most loved people in this world were recently conceived through IVF. Their parents were fortunate enough to endure the financial aspect, to be there to support each other through their emotions, and are now surrounded by the tremendous sound, joy and love in the two children they were able to bring into this world, all through the help of science and excellent care teams.

Becoming a mom and/or a dad is something most people take for granted. We no longer view becoming a parent as something that is easily done; it can be downright heartbreaking to some. Do we have the right to take away the ability to procreate even if not through intimate practices? We say no and urge you to vote no on the current

language of HB1373, protecting the rights for responsible providers and allowing hope for wanting parents-to-be.

IVF treatments are time consuming, emotionally challenging and extremely expensive. No parent or medical provider enters into this decision lightly.

Making the provider responsible to any criminal action caused through the death of an embryonic egg in their care could inhibit the growth of one of our most precious, valued and natural resources - the future generation - the birth of children - your children, your grandchildren, your great grandchildren and on for generations to come.