

February 3, 2025

Chairman and Members of the Council,

My name is Anne Gehring. I am a concerned ND resident asking you for a Do NOT Pass on House Bill 1373.

I believe HB 1373 was written with no prior education or research on what it relates to. It seems, based on attempts to get clarification from the Representative who wrote the bill, that she is unwilling to listen to the concerns of the people the bill will directly affect or take the opportunity to learn more about it. The vagueness of the bills language leads me to believe it was rushed or intentionally written in a way that will have the largest impact; either way, it is bad for North Dakota.

As evidence of the lack of research done, VanWinkle claims the main elements of IVF will remain legal under this bill, referring to the creation, freezing and implantation of embryos. These things are far from all that is involved in IVF.

There are necessary steps to the IVF process that will become illegal under HB 1373. Some of these steps include the time the fertilized egg has to grow in the lab between fertilization and freezing, and the fact that not all embryos transferred to a womans uterus are guaranteed to implant. Neither of these things are caused by human error, but both would be considered the wrongful destruction of embryos and therefore be illegal. The only remaining IVF clinic in North Dakota cannot and will not continue helping families create life under the threat of criminal liability.

Its true that my son and daughter in law are utilizing IVF for their future pregnancies after having six unexplained miscarriages and no living children. This bill will negatively impact their ability to have a living child. However, that is far from my only concern related to this bill.

Other states have passed similar bills without clarification on what it pertains to or the proper exclusions to provide necessary protections. They are now seeing the ramifications of additional things being affected that were not discussed when the law was a bill (see articles about Alabama and other states anti-IVF law for examples). I am concerned that this is going to happen in North Dakota, too.

In states with bills like this, there are notable drops in OB-GYN residencies and a decrease in womens health practitioners in general. Pregnant women carrying non-viable pregnancies or who are pregnant from rape (including incest) or after being forced into sex trafficking have to travel to another state for emergency medical care.

North Dakota HB 1373 has no exclusions to protect a woman in relation to abortion, not even if there is rape or incest.

As previously mentioned, my son and daughter in law have had six unexplained miscarriages. I am fearful of the effect this bill will

have on medical management required after miscarriage. I have watched my daughter in law undergo four D&C surgeries to

remove her dead baby from her body. I asked the Representative who proposed this bill if the procedure will be protected in the case of miscarriage. She did not answer.

Women are not protected under HB 1373. Families dependent on IVF for pregnancy are not protected under HB 1373.

I do not think due diligence has been done to ensure the impacts of this bill are fully understood. Passing this bill is irresponsible without being educated on its effects.

Please protect the right to parenthood and necessary medical intervention for citizens of your state by recommending Do NOT Pass on House Bill 1373.

Thank you for your time and for ensuring you know what HB 1373 will do to our state before making your decision.

Respectfully,

Anne Gehring

Minot, North Dakota