

February 3, 2025

Testimony in Opposition to HB1373

Dear Chair Ruby and Members of the Human Services Committee,

I write to you as a lifelong North Dakota resident and as someone who has faced the emotional and physical challenges of infertility, including the journey of in vitro fertilization (IVF). I am here to express my strong opposition to HB 1373, which, as it is currently written, poses a serious threat not only to women's health in the event of a reproductive health emergency but also to the complex realities faced by those of us navigating assisted reproductive technologies.

As someone who is undergoing IVF with my husband to create our family, I deeply understand the desire to create and protect life. However, HB 1373 fundamentally alters the landscape of reproductive healthcare in North Dakota, creating numerous ethical and legal complications that could jeopardize the very processes that help individuals and couples achieve their dreams of parenthood. With existing legislation already restricting abortion in our state, it is unclear to me what purpose this bill serves other than to further jeopardize the already limited assisted reproductive technologies available in our state.

The definition of "Unborn child" in the bill — as “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” — is problematic for the IVF community. In IVF, multiple embryos are often created, but not all are viable. The decision regarding our embryos is deeply personal and made in consultation with our medical team. However, if embryos are granted personhood status, the consequences could be devastating. Clinics will be forced to halt IVF treatments, leaving those of us who desperately want to start families with fewer options. Those in favor of this bill insist IVF is not at risk, but how could it not be at risk based on the language in this bill as it is currently written?

The emotional and financial toll of infertility is already significant, and this bill only adds another barrier. As a member of the IVF community, I implore you to consider the implications of this bill not just as a legal issue but as a deeply personal matter affecting real lives. Please vote **DO NOT PASS HB 1373**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Katie Richter
District 31
Mandan, ND