

Human Services Committee

HB 1373

February 4, 2025

Dear Chairman Ruby and members of the Human Services Committee;

Life is the first of the three enumerated freedoms guaranteed protection by our fledgling government in our Declaration of Independence recognizing the equality of all based on the endowment of our Creator. For these rights our brave founders pledged their "lives, fortunes, and sacred honor". As elected officials on the Human Services Committee in North Dakota, you have the strongest voices given to you by your constituents in order to give voice to the weakest among you. You have taken an oath to protect our Constitution for the 6-fold purpose it stated to "ordain and establish" for "We the people". Each of these statements of purpose hinges on life and the last one even specifies that our "Blessings of Liberty" are secured not only for us, but for "our Posterity". Though I am a resident of Tennessee and have only visited your great state one time, I had the pleasure of meeting a fine representative of your state, Sadie Olsen, while at the March For Life in DC in January. Her powerful testimony may be read among the many letters in favor of supporting the proposed HB 1373. At her request I submit this letter today.

Life is such a grand adventure filled with moments that seem insignificant at present in spite of having the ability to shift the entire trajectory of future paths. Most often these turns can only be seen retrospectively. One of these moments in my life occurred when I was about 12 years old. While we innocently ate hot fudge sundaes, a friend my age who loved the element of surprise randomly asked my mom what she would do if I became pregnant. My mom was caught off guard by the prospect. In our innocence, no actions that could lead to pregnancy had even entered our minds. I had fully been swayed by messages from my public-school education and the culture of the day. I had it all figured out and let it be known in all my youthful false wisdom that I would simply have an abortion. "Problem" solved! Thankfully, this conversation ended with my loving mother's assurance of her commitment to me and her theoretical grandchild was forefront in my mind when I did actually become pregnant at 17 years old. Knowing that I had been given the gift of life not a "problem" and that I was not alone gave me the courage to never even give abortion a consideration. The father of our baby offered his strong hand in marriage. We will celebrate our 40th anniversary this year with a 39 year old son, Chance, who is the loving husband to our daughter-in-law, Molly, and father of our four precious grandchildren. My brave mother lent her voice to her posterity without even knowing her bold support for life would have so many ripple effects for her own posterity. Though everyone may not have the level of support in a similar situation that I did, everyone deserves to have a chance at life! Adoption is a beautiful option.

Though my voice is small and coming from quite a distance, I implore you to vote in favor of HB 1373 that the voices of many unborn "We the people" will be heard. While in DC at Life or Death Con, Seth Gruber taught me who the first person to officially offer the sentiment "My body: My choice" was... Jesus. As it should be, the strong are willing to stand for the weak. Be strong! Your voice matters!

Blessings,

Jessica Smith, Pharm.D