

February 4, 2025

Chairman Ruby, Vice Chairman Frelich, Members of the House Human Services Committee, for the record by name is Allison Caldwell and I am offering testimony in opposition of house bill 1373.

Fertilized eggs are NOT children. Embryos are NOT children. In order to yield a live birth many things must go right, starting with a fertilized egg, but as I will outline from my personal outcomes below a fertilized egg or even an embryo does not equal a baby. IF ONLY it were that easy. I am 36. I have 2 girls born through IVF and have had 1 miscarriage.

My 1st egg retrieval in 2018:

- 15 eggs retrieved
- 11 fertilized into zygotes
- Transferred 2 embryos 3 days after my retrieval that looked “hopeful”, and we watched the remaining 6 grow in the lab. All 6 in lab demised. 2 transferred did not take.
- 8 embryos = 0 pregnancies/births

My 2nd egg retrieval in 2019:

- 20 eggs retrieved
- 11 fertilized into zygotes
- 5 of those progressed to blastocyst stage (early embryo) and were genetically tested for viability
- 2 were confirmed genetically normal embryos or euploids.
- 5 embryos = 2 live births

In summary, my 1st retrieval 15 eggs retrieved and none developed into blastocyst embryos. And my 2nd retrieval of 20 eggs, 2 were given a hopeful chance of successful implantation if all things went perfectly. If implantation did occur, the pregnancy would still not be considered viable until visualized on ultrasound between 6-10 weeks to confirm the embryo is in the uterus (not ectopic), there is normal heart activity developing, and there are no early signs of other abnormalities.

To give you a visual here is an embryo development chart – none of which are children. Graphs like these are in the thousands online if you wish to look at more in detail.



I feel it also important to tell you that I recently experience miscarriage at 9 ½ weeks. I had a miraculous spontaneous pregnancy I never thought possible. Although the signs looked great with my lab work and I had a confirmed viable pregnancy on ultrasound at 6 weeks, this baby would never have lived in this world. I had the fetus genetically tested after I miscarried, and it had genetic abnormalities that made the fetus not compatible with life. Did I grieve this pregnancy – absolutely and it will stick with me my whole life I am certain of that. But this is just another example of how fertilized eggs (NOT JUST IN IVF), embryos and even pregnancies do not equate to a living, breathing child.

This bill is outlandish and should not be passed on. Families in ND deserve the chance to pursue IVF if they so choose.

Respectfully,

Allison Caldwell

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