

To members of the Human Services committee:

I am writing to you in opposition to the “personhood” bill. This bill puts women’s lives at risk. There have been several cases in other states in America where a pregnant woman had some complications with her pregnancy, was denied care, and died due to the health complications. The reasons for that lack of care were a hospital’s fear of legal charges being brought upon them for providing care because of laws that were enacted such as this one.

Josseli Barnica was one woman who was denied care in Texas due to a litany of abortion and pregnancy-related laws that were recently passed. Hospitals, fearing for their own legal safety, denied care. She later died due to complications from her miscarriage. A third woman died as of November of 2024 due to similar circumstances from her miscarriage and the hospital’s denial of care, again due to the litany of laws in regard to abortion and pregnancy.

Some may argue that the hospitals were in the wrong to deny that care because it was a miscarriage. However, a clinic or hospital will certainly have to look out for their own legal safety in order to continue operation and care for all the other patients and retain their medical staff.

Another aspect of this bill, whether intentional or not, is also worth mentioning. In vitro fertilization has been an effective way for couples to have children and create families. This bill would restrict that option for North Dakota families who are having difficulty with reproduction for whatever reason. It would muddy the waters of IVF and would intimidate doctors and other medical professionals from even practicing in North Dakota for fear of their own legal safety.

A bill such as this one, HB 1373, is too restrictive over a person’s body and health. Furthermore, it convolutes and muddies the legal waters over life and personhood and a woman’s bodily autonomy and even common medical practice. It is inconsistent with the message of liberty and security that are tenets of the Constitution and natural rights of people everywhere. North Dakota already has laws about abortion and its restriction. It is time to stop with these overly restrictive laws that are designed to shape people’s basic behavior, health care, and liberty. I strongly oppose HB 1373.