

Human Services Committee

HB 1373

February 5, 2025

Chair Ruby and Members of the Committee,

My name is Casey Loving. I am retired from the Air Force and currently reside in Minot, ND. I have two teenaged children. Over the course of my military career I have lived in multiple states and countries. Because of this I was exposed many other cultures and ways of life that most people do not get to experience. I feel that gives me a unique perspective on life.

I am writing to speak AGAINST House Bill 1373. I do not believe that passing this bill is in the best interest of women's health. I believe that abortion is healthcare and should not only be used as a last resort to save a mother's life. There are many other reasons that a woman should be allowed to have an abortion. Rape, incest, birth defects that would likely result in a high mortality rates or low quality of life to name a few. Also because it is none of my business. Or yours, or anyone else's. A woman's decision to have an abortion is between her and her doctor.

Aside from the abortion aspect of bill, I would like to address concerns that have been raised about IVF. I have multiple friends who have used IVF to conceive in their journey to parenthood. I have helped give them their shots. I held their hands while watching the pink line move across a pregnancy test while waiting for results. I held them while they cried

when it came back negative. I threw them baby showers when it finally worked. I held their sweet little infants in my arms when they were born. I send them gifts on their birthdays and Christmas. I will be there for the graduations, the weddings and everything in between.

During IVF treatment multiple eggs are fertilized at a time to ensure that enough will be available for attempted implantation when the time comes. Many of the embryos may not end up being viable or able to be implanted for one reason or another. Usually multiple embryos will be implanted at once because not all, or any, are guaranteed to stay. That is a discussion had between the doctor and patient. There are often left over embryos after implantation. The patient may choose to freeze them for the time being while waiting to see if the pregnancy takes. There are fees associated with this for freezing and storage.

IVF is extremely expensive. People often use their life savings or take out loans for this treatment. They spend tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of dollars to have just one or two children. Most insurance does not cover IVF or covers very little. One of my friends took one and half years to conceive via IVF, was blessed with 10 year old twins and is still paying on loans from her IVF treatments.

You may be wondering why I explained how IVF works in the simplest of ways. I just want to ensure you understand before this next part. With the cost of IVF, most people can only afford one or two cycles of treatment regardless of

success. With that being said, many people have left over frozen embryos after their treatment has concluded whether they were successful in conceiving or not. With this bill, an embryo that was created in a clinic via IVF would be considered an unborn child per your definition of "the moment of fertilization upon the fusion of a human spermatozoon with a human ovum" even if that embryo is never implanted within the mother. What would become of those embryos? Based on my research, there are two options. Option one, the patient pays for the embryo freezing and storage fees then passes that financial burden on to their family when they die or until this bill is abolished, should it pass. Or option two, they are forced to give the embryo to someone else in order to avoid paying for the storage for eternity. FORCED to allow someone else to be impregnated, give birth to and raise their child. That is absolutely reprehensible to think about. Would it be legal to force someone to give up their toddler, their 8 year old, or their 15 year old to someone else? Why is there a difference between a born or unborn child in that instance? A child is a child at all stages of life, right? Bottom line, people should be able to choose what they want to do with those embryos and destroying them should be a viable option.

I hope that you strongly consider all aspects of what this bill would impact should it pass. This is not just an anti-abortion bill. That would be bad enough. But this also affects people who have difficulty conceiving. They have hard enough decisions to make when doing IVF treatments and a big enough financial burden. This is America. We are a

country built on our freedoms. We constantly boast about those freedoms in comparison to other countries. Yet it seems as if at every turn, some new bill, some new act, or executive order is being passed infringing on those freedoms and our right and this is just another example of that.

Sincerely,

Casey Loving

