

To Whom It May Concern,

I urge the committee to oppose Bill 1373.

The reasons to vote against it are many, backed by science and defense of religious freedom.

Some feel personhood begins at conception; however, to assume most believe this uniformly in our state is a gross misrepresentation. Those who do support this bill cite specific religious reasons, which are not followed or practiced by everyone who resides here. It is worth noting that people who support this bill can make the choice to act in a way that honors its statutes within their own families, without imposing it as law on others who do not subscribe to their personal philosophies or religious beliefs. The arm of the law is not a bludgeoning instrument for those who believe in a specific religion, yet that is what this bill effectively is.

This bill also restricts the rights of over half the state's population to make decisions about their own bodies to an absurd level - if enacted, any person who is pregnant or even could be pregnant would be subject to this law. Those who do not know they are pregnant would be subject to it as well as those who suffer miscarriage. It reduces those who happen to have a functioning uterus and are of reproductive age to effectively second-class citizens, dehumanizing us and violating our right to exist as persons - to make decisions for ourselves and our families. It should go without saying: young women are not cattle to be bred, and should not be considered as such under the law.

Furthermore, the ramifications of this bill would have far-reaching effects, including impacting the ability of IVF treatment facilities to operate in our state, as well as directly impacting the decisions of many couples to pursue family planning in any capacity. Pregnancy, which is already a precarious and uncertain time for many who experience it, becomes a harrowing threat to strip a person of her own right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Several people have submitted testimony in support of this bill. They are loud, in the minority, not representative of our state and, most importantly, wrong.

Intrinsically, each of us understands that this bill represents government overreach and the despicable co-mingling of church and state. In North Dakota, we respect the rule of common sense. This bill attempts to oppose what we know to be true: pregnancy is a nuanced, unique, and complicated time for each person that experiences it. Decisions surrounding this experience are best left to each person in collaboration with medical professionals to make the right decisions for themselves and their families.

Please, for the sake of sanity in North Dakota, vote do not pass on Bill 1373.