

I am writing this testimony IN OPPOSITION to HB 1373:

I am a nurse practitioner at the only clinic in North Dakota that currently provides IVF services. I have spent the last 8+ years helping couples make their dreams of having children and starting a family come true. I do not take this work lightly. There is an extreme amount of science, and for some people, faith, that goes into assisted fertility procedures, such as IVF. It is possible to believe in both God and in science. Strong proponents of this bill only see one side, and lack the scientific knowledge that is necessary to understand the process of fertilization, embryo growth, and implantation that must take place in order for a pregnancy to result. They fail to understand that up to 50% of all fertilized eggs will not even make it to an embryo. Furthermore, we know that only about 50% of embryos will result in pregnancy. Science is not perfect and we certainly don't pretend to be God. We know there are other factors, many we don't yet understand, that play a part in the transformation from a fertilized egg to a resulting pregnancy. That's where, for a lot of patients, faith comes in.

As healthcare providers, we do our best to help patients achieve pregnancy ethically and responsibly. We don't discard embryos unnecessarily. Many of our patients never end up discarding embryos at all. No one cares more about an embryo than the couple who is so desperately wanting a child.

The bill, as written, would be detrimental for IVF treatment. It would put health care providers providing IVF treatment and patients utilizing IVF treatment at risk for litigation. To put it simply, we would no longer be able to legally provide this care in the State of North Dakota. The vague language of the bill also makes management for non-viable pregnancies incredibly difficult. Experiencing the loss of a pregnancy is a heart-breaking process. It does not need to also be a life threatening one.

I strongly urge you to vote against HB 1373. Do this for the couples who are experiencing the heartache of infertility or pregnancy loss, those who rely on IVF to make their dreams of becoming parents come true, and for the healthcare providers trying to help them achieve those dreams.