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North Dakota State Capitol  
600 E Boulevard Ave  
Bismarck, ND 58505

Attention regarding HB 1373

I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill 1373, which seeks to establish that life begins at fertilization. As a board certified, practicing obstetrician gynecologist in North Dakota, I have significant concerns about the implications of this bill on women's health, medical practice, and reproductive rights.

First and foremost, the determination that life begins at fertilization is not supported by the consensus of the medical and scientific communities. The definition of the beginning of life is complex and multifaceted, involving biological, ethical, and philosophical considerations. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recognizes that pregnancy is established only when a fertilized egg has implanted in the lining of the uterus. This distinction is crucial for both medical practice and patient care.

The passage of House Bill 1373 would have far-reaching and potentially harmful consequences for women's health. It could criminalize common and necessary medical procedures, such as in vitro fertilization (IVF), which helps many couples achieve their dream of parenthood. Additionally, it could restrict access to contraception methods that prevent implantation, thereby limiting women's ability to make informed choices about their reproductive health.

Furthermore, this bill could place physicians in an untenable position, forcing us to navigate conflicting legal and ethical obligations. It could lead to increased medical liability and hinder our ability to provide evidence-based care to our patients. The potential for criminal penalties may deter physicians from practicing in North Dakota, exacerbating the already critical shortage of healthcare providers in our state.

In summary, House Bill 1373 poses significant risks to women's health, undermines the practice of evidence-based medicine, and imposes undue burdens on both patients and healthcare providers. I urge you to consider the profound implications of this bill and to oppose its passage.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. I am available to discuss this matter further and provide any additional information that may be helpful.

Sincerely,

Jared M. Sander, MD  
Obstetrician Gynecologist  
Fellow of American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
Fargo, ND