

**Opposition for HB 1373
House Human Services
February 5, 2025**

Chair Ruby, Vice Chair Frelich, and members of the Committee,

My name is Katie Christensen Mineer, and I am the North Dakota State Director of External Affairs for Planned Parenthood North Central States. I submit this testimony in strong opposition to HB 1373, an extreme and dangerous attempt to grant legal rights to fertilized eggs.

Planned Parenthood North Central States provides advocacy, education, and expert reproductive health care, across our five-state region. At our Moorhead health center, over 50% of our patients are residents of North Dakota. We have tens of thousands of supporters throughout the state, and our education team reaches more than 500 North Dakotans each year. Our mission affirms the human right to reproductive health care and freedom.

HB 1373 is out of step with science, medicine, and the will of the people in our state. When a nearly identical personhood measure appeared on the ballot in 2014, voters rejected it by a 2:1 margin—sending a clear message that they do not support this kind of government overreach.

If enacted, this bill could limit access to miscarriage and pregnancy complication treatments. A pregnant person needing lifesaving medical care, such as chemotherapy, could be denied treatment due to legal uncertainty. The bill's vague and confusing language would have a chilling effect on healthcare providers, who may fear prosecution for providing essential care.

Furthermore, this bill would ban abortion in all cases including rape and incest—ignoring the trauma survivors face. It would also exacerbate racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare, making it even harder for marginalized communities to access necessary reproductive health services.

Strict laws, like the one proposed here, have led to a decline in medical professionals practicing in affected states. A 2024 study found that OB-GYNs in states with abortion bans reported increased distress, fear of legal repercussions, and intentions to leave.¹ Additionally, the Association of American Medical Colleges reported a decrease in applications to OB-GYN residency programs in states with abortion bans, which further restricts access to care.² And lastly, all these factors lead to poorer health outcomes, including maternal mortality and increased risks for pregnant individuals.³

The Planned Parenthood Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota Action Fund strongly urges a Do Not Pass recommendation on HB 1373.

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1. Sabbath EL, McKetchnie SM, Arora KS, Buchbinder M. US Obstetrician-Gynecologists' Perceived Impacts of Post-Dobbs v Jackson State Abortion Bans. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2024;7(1):e2352109.
2. KFF Health News. "Medical Residents Are Starting to Avoid States with Abortion Bans, Data Shows." *NPR*, 9 May 2024.
3. Declercq, E., Barnard-Mayers, R., Zephyrin, L. C., & Johnson, K. (2022, December 14). *The U.S. Maternal Health Divide: The Limited Maternal Health Services and Worse Outcomes of States Proposing New Abortion Restrictions*. The Commonwealth Fund