

My name is Meagan McDougall, and I usually introduce myself as a proud North Dakotan. My family has been in North Dakota for generations, and I chose to stay in North Dakota to work, live, and hopefully build my family. You can ask any of my friends and they'll affirm that I am always pitching the value of living in North Dakota – kind people, affordable living, job opportunities – the American dream.

Part of my American dream is that I'll have the opportunity to have kids and grow my family. This is why I am writing today in opposition of HB 1373. HB 1373's changed definitions of "unborn child" will put IVF services at risk in the state of ND, which is a critical fertility treatment that my family needs to be able to have children.

For my family, and many people in my network, treatment from facilities like Sanford Reproductive Clinic in Fargo, where I receive my care, is a medical necessity in order to have children. The providers at this clinic state that their work results in 150-180 births each year, and that 3% of babies each year are conceived via IVF. The extremely narrow definition of "unborn child" presented in this bill will put undue risk on the providers and institutions providing this care. With the wording of this bill, we risk families losing their ability to expand, and being forced to make the awful choice to let go of their dream, seek care in other states, or potentially move their families closer to where they can receive necessary treatments. We risk families not considering North Dakota as a place to seek employment opportunities due to not having access to necessary care, which will impact all North Dakota businesses. We risk facilities like Sanford Reproductive Clinic's ability to operate in North Dakota and be forced to shutter their doors.

I want to continue to introduce myself as a proud North Dakotan. Please support families like mine and across the state by opposing HB 1373. Please protect the lives of our future children by keeping IVF services accessible to all North Dakota families so they have the ability to grow and build lives in my beautiful state.

Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony.