

Dear Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I am writing this testimony **IN OPPOSITION** to HB 1373, for many reasons. I am a physician, a wife, and a hopeful future mother. I have recently returned to ND to start my family and career, and unfortunately after years of struggles with infertility, I am now due to start my first IVF cycle in Fargo next month.

1. This bill as written would **effectively remove IVF as an option** in this state. This would affect residents of ND and its surrounding states, many of whom have to travel hours (often multiple times a month) to reach the only Reproductive Endocrinologist in our state, in Fargo. It is not uncommon to have significant loss of early embryos in this process, and medical professionals will not assume the liability to continue to practice in this state with potential threat of litigation – and who could blame them?
2. The strict definitions in this bill could allow for questioning and **persecution of women experiencing miscarriages**. It is not uncommon for early pregnancies to end in spontaneous abortions (“miscarriages”), sometimes before the woman is aware of her pregnancy. Was it the new workout class? The glass of wine? Or was it just a natural biological process? Other states with similar laws have already seen women questioned or incarcerated.
3. This bill would limit the ability of this state to **attract medical professionals**. I am not an OB/GYN or Reproductive Endocrinologist, but I do treat pregnant patients in my practice, some of whom require medical or surgical abortion. This is something that the writers of this bill have no formal education in, and subsequently do not understand the complexities involved in medical decision making. I wanted to return here to raise my family, but why would I stay if both my medical practice and my personal life are limited to such a degree that I may face LEGAL CONSEQUENCES. I would encourage colleagues and friends to avoid this as well. This will only potentiate a crushing physician shortage in this state.
4. **Residents of this state already rejected** this proposition in 2014 when the ballot measure attempting to confer personhood to human zygotes was rejected by over 64% of North Dakotans. This is not the will of the people. Why are we deliberating about this again?
5. Finally, I’d like to bring attention to the fact that a majority of testimonies in support of this bill originate from **out of state interest groups** who have no vested interest in the policies of our state. There seems to be a religious theme to nearly all of these testimonies. The first amendment enshrines our freedom of religion. I have many patients who are not Christian. I should not be forced to make medical decisions for my patients, or health decisions for myself, based on someone else’s religious preferences.

I urge you to please vote IN OPPOSITION to HB 1373.