

Chairman Ruby and Members of the Committee,

I am writing this testimony as support for HB 1477.

I am a woman that was born and raised in North Dakota. I received my Bachelor's degree in nursing at the University of North Dakota. I worked in Women's Health as a labor and delivery nurse for 5 years before returning to graduate school to get my Master's Degree and board certification as a Women's Health Nurse Practitioner. I returned to North Dakota to continue my career as a woman taking care of other women. A health care provider called to help treat people with a medical diagnosis.

I have had the honor of providing care to women and men who suffer from infertility for close to 10 years now. Every single day is filled with highs and lows, happiness and sorrow, and an unexplainable feeling that only a woman who wants to become a mom can explain. And for those of us sitting across from the patients each and every day in that exam room, an unexplainable passion for helping them achieve this dream.

Fertility treatments rarely are covered by insurance. The patients we see get second jobs, spend their life savings, or take out loans with the goal of being able to achieve their dreams of becoming parents.

Other patients receive heartbreaking cancer diagnoses and are given days to determine if they are able to preserve their fertility before starting life saving treatments like chemotherapy and radiation, both of which can prevent the ability to conceive after treatments.

Every single person has the right to be able to receive TREATMENT for a MEDICAL DIAGNOSIS. Infertility is a medical diagnosis that impacts 1 in 6 people. North Dakota has ONE clinic that provides fertility services like IVF. This clinic has faced personhood bills and bills to abolish these treatments based on political and religious beliefs. Now more than ever, protection for the ability to not only provide fertility treatments but also receive fertility treatments is essential.

I strongly urge you to place yourselves in the shoes of others--what would your best friend, your daughter, your brother, your niece, or your son say if they knew that their ability to have a child with the assistance of infertility treatments in North Dakota was abolished because of lack of support to pass this bill? Now picture yourself in their shoes again--your family member or friend having the ability to receive the medical treatments that they need in order to create the family they dreamed of. All because of your support of this bill. You have the ability to make these scenarios a reality.

Let's put ourselves on the right side of history. Let's move forward, not backward. Let's be good humans and keep politics out of the doctor's office.

Respectfully,

Alli Harrison