

Chairman and Members of the Committee, I am part of 1 in 9 diagnosed with endometriosis, which contributes to 1 in 6 adults who experience infertility. In 2018, after trying to conceive our first child for 9 months, and after 15 plus years of excruciating menstrual cycles, I sought out answers to ensure we were on the right track to start our family. In February 2019, I had my first laparoscopic surgery where they discovered and removed endometriosis. Finally, after years of pain I had a true answer and diagnoses. Shortly after experiencing the positive effects of the surgery, I was able to conceive my first child.

Two years later, when we decided to expand our family, I anticipated challenges given my history with endometriosis. After a year of unsuccessful attempts and worsening pain, I underwent another laparoscopic surgery. The surgery revealed that my endometriosis had progressed significantly in just 2.5 years. Roughly 3 months later, we became pregnant which unfortunately ended in a devastating miscarriage. Research indicates that those with endometriosis face a 75% increased risk of miscarriage, a reality we came to understand all too well.

As our journey to conceive continued, my daughter started asking about when she would get a sibling. It broke my heart to share with her how hard mom and dad were trying to grow our family. Watching her care for me after my second surgery and after our miscarriage just like I knew she planned to care for her future sibling. These moments highlighted that infertility doesn't just affect the parents trying, it impacts the whole family, including those excitedly waiting for the new addition.

After two years of trying naturally, we turned to IVF. For someone with endometriosis, IVF offers key benefits—it reduces the risk of endometriosis affecting the sperm and egg, increases the chance of successful implantation, and helps regulate the hormones critical for sustaining a pregnancy. We were fortunate to have a successful IVF cycle and have welcomed our second daughter this past November. She is everything we have dreamed of and more.

However, I can't help but feel deeply concerned for the future. Anti-abortion Republican politicians feel emboldened, so I'm worried that they will next try to limit access to other reproductive health care like IVF and birth control. The hope and joy that IVF has brought to our family is something I want to be available to all families facing similar fertility challenges. Everyone should have the right to pursue fertility treatments if they need them. This bill is about making sure that families who want to grow have the opportunity to do so, despite the challenges they may face. It's about providing hope and the chance to build the family they've dreamed of, just as we've been fortunate enough to do.

Please support this bill and protect IVF in North Dakota by giving it a DO PASS recommendation. Thanks for hearing my story, I'm happy to take any questions.