

January 28, 2025

Chairman Ruby and Members of the House Human Services Committee,

Please accept this testimony in support of a DO PASS recommendation on HB 1477 to protect access to fertility treatment and reproductive healthcare in North Dakota.

Throughout this Legislative Session, I have listened to Legislators discuss protecting family values on a variety of topics, from gambling to business hours and more. There is no better opportunity to protect family values than by ensuring that North Dakotans have the right to access the care necessary to create their families - in whatever form that takes.

I spent more than three years attempting to become pregnant, however due to a condition called Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome, I was unable to conceive without medical intervention. Thankfully, my husband and I had the opportunity to receive care at Sanford Reproductive Medicine Clinic in Fargo - North Dakota's only reproductive medicine provider. After many attempts to conceive, increasing the level of treatment with each attempt, I became pregnant through an IUI treatment in January of 2024, and my husband and I welcomed our son in October 2024.

Simply put, I would not have a child without this treatment, and I most certainly will never become pregnant again without the use of IUI or IVF.

Unfortunately, my story is not unique. In fact, I would feel confident in assuming that someone you know or love has also required fertility treatment in some form to create their families. 1 in 6 women experience infertility and require medical intervention to become pregnant.

Throughout this three-year journey, I was consistently concerned that political or legal decisions could impact my access to care. I worried that I could run out of time and that necessary treatments would no longer be allowed by law, the clinic could be closed, or my doctors barred from practicing. No one who is already dealing with the physical and mental toll of infertility should also have to be concerned that someone is going to rip away their only path to conceiving children.

This bill ensures that no one will have to face that reality. Protecting fertility treatment and reproductive healthcare can only make North Dakota families stronger.

For me, my family, and the thousands of North Dakota parents who have fertility treatments to thank for their beloved children - I thank you for your consideration and ask for a Do Pass Recommendation.

Sincerely,

Rachel Richter Lordemann, District 45, West Fargo