

My name is Alexa Swanston and I am a concerned North Dakota resident and mother of two beautiful children that are here today because of the diligent efforts of the staff at Sanford Reproductive Clinic. I am writing today in support of HB1477.

HB1477 necessarily protects the ability to access necessary IVF services to countless residents aiming to grow or start their families.

Seven and a half years ago, in July 2017, I first walked in to the Sanford Reproductive Clinic in Fargo and asked for help. Like many, I had a deep and persistent desire to be a mother. I came from a large family and as the eldest child, knew that I wanted as many children as possible. What I didn't know was that it would take another 4 years, 17 assisted attempts, and profound loss, from the moment I asked for help, for my first child, a son we named William, to be born. May 3, 2021 became the happiest day of my life. It would not have been possible without the knowledge and resources of my medical team. Two years later, I was fortunate enough again to experience unbridled, overwhelming joy and gratitude as we welcomed our second son, Finley, into the world. It is a miracle that he is here today; that miracle was IVF, and the subsequent care it provided.

As all who are lucky enough to be parents know, kids can be a handful more often than not. But I am a person that is defined by my motherhood. Over the last seven and a half years, I have been astounded by the number of people in my life I have come to find have utilized IVF to help grow and create their families. Colleagues and friends, those with multiple children and some still praying for one. There is no one that cares more for an embryo than an IVF patient. However, no one understands more than IVF patients, that an embryo is not a child.

Much of the proposed legislation this term centers on protecting life- and that is what I am asking you to do by supporting HB1477. Please see the lives of my two sons that do not exist without reproductive services. Please see and protect the lives of my future children by keeping these services accessible so that all North Dakota families have the ability to grow.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony and consider it in relation to the bills before you.