

My name is Meagan McDougall, and I usually introduce myself as a proud North Dakotan. My family has been in North Dakota for generations, and I chose to stay in North Dakota to work, live, and hopefully build my family. You can ask any of my friends and they'll affirm that I am always pitching the value of living in North Dakota – kind people, affordable living, job opportunities – the American dream.

Part of making this dream a reality for my family and for countless others is providing access to fertility treatments. This is why I am writing today in support of HB 1477. HB 1477 protects the ability to access necessary IVF services to ND residents aiming to start or grow their families.

For my family, and many people in my network, treatment from facilities like Sanford Reproductive Clinic in Fargo, where I receive my care, is a medical necessity in order to have children. I fear for what losing fertility protections would mean for families, communities, and our state. Without protecting this access, we risk families losing their ability to expand, and being forced to make the awful choice to let go of that dream, seek care in other states, or potentially move their families closer to where they can receive necessary treatments. We risk families not considering North Dakota as a place to seek employment opportunities due to not having access to necessary care, which will impact all North Dakota businesses. We risk facilities like Sanford Reproductive Clinic's ability to operate in North Dakota and be forced to shutter their doors.

I want to continue to introduce myself as a proud North Dakotan. Please support families like mine and across the state by supporting HB 1477. Please protect the lives of our future children by keeping fertility services accessible to all North Dakota families so they have the ability to grow and build lives in my beautiful state.

Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony.