

Prepared Testimony of Shauna Erickson-Abou Zahr, M.S., LMFT

Testimony in Favor of House Bill 1478

Chairman Ruby and Members of the Committee:

I share my testimony in favor of HB 1478 as a woman who has spent her life in our state, required access to contraceptive services for diverse reasons, and practice at a local nonprofit supporting children's mental health, of which a frequent topic of client stress is protection against unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. My personal needs have included but not been limited to painful cycles that used to keep me out of school and my athletic events, skin related problems, irregularity in painful cycles every month, heavy cycles that impacted iron levels and therefore overall health, and IVF planning and procedures. Having safe, affordable, and informed access to contraceptive services are pivotal to people's lives in our state.

My testimony serves as a plead to consider the protections HB 1478 would provider North Dakotans.

Contraception provides a means to manage many women's health conditions including endometriosis, polycystic ovarian syndrome, and clinically heavy menses cycles. Of equal importance, it provides access to means to manage pregnancy occurrence, which has correlation to decreased need of abortion procedures for unplanned pregnancies. Protecting access to contraceptive services allows for doctors and patients to make decisions about their healthcare needs, and in our state we need to allow our medical experts to diagnosis, treat, and prescribe as their extensive training has prepared them to do.

Please consider the extensive purpose contraceptive access holds for the health of our neighbors, and vote in favor of HB 1478.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shauna M. Erickson-Abou Zahr', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Shauna M. Erickson-Abou Zahr

1/24/25