

Testimony in Opposition to House Bill No. 1488
North Dakota Legislative Assembly
Sixty-ninth Legislative Session

Dear Members of the North Dakota Legislature,

My name is Hannah James, and I am submitting this testimony in strong opposition to House Bill No. 1488. This bill seeks to impose restrictive regulations on abortion care in North Dakota, further limiting access to reproductive healthcare and placing unnecessary governmental barriers between patients and their doctors.

The Abortion Approval Committee, as outlined in House Bill No. 1488, is an unnecessary and intrusive governmental body that undermines the ability of a woman and her physician to make private medical decisions. By requiring third-party approval for certain abortion procedures, the bill delays essential medical care, increases bureaucratic red tape, and places medical decisions in the hands of individuals who may not be directly involved in the patient's case. These types of restrictions interfere with the doctor-patient relationship and could result in preventable harm to pregnant individuals.

Many individuals may not even realize they are pregnant until well into the first trimester, making the 15-week limitation particularly harmful. Furthermore, requiring approval from a committee for abortions performed between 16 and 26 weeks is a dangerous policy that disregards urgent medical realities. Forcing individuals to continue pregnancies against their will or despite serious health risks can have devastating physical and mental consequences.

While the bill allows for abortion in medical emergencies, it places arbitrary and vague restrictions on when such procedures may occur. Medical professionals should be trusted to use their expertise in determining when a pregnancy poses a serious health risk to a patient. By adding additional barriers, this bill could create confusion and hesitation among doctors, leading to delayed emergency care and putting lives at risk.

House Bill No. 1488 imposes criminal penalties for failing to "preserve the life of a viable child," even in cases where medical professionals are acting within the best interests of their patients. The vague language and punitive measures in this bill contribute to a climate of fear and stigmatization for both patients and healthcare providers, deterring professionals from offering necessary care.

This bill is an extreme overreach into the private lives and healthcare decisions of North Dakotans. It restricts access to essential reproductive healthcare, creates unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles, and places individuals at risk of delayed or denied medical care. **I urge you to reject House Bill No. 1488 and instead focus on policies that truly support the health and well-being of North Dakotans, including expanding access to comprehensive healthcare, contraception, and maternal support services.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Hannah James
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