

Chairman Weisz and members of the Human Services Committee,

My name is Amy Ingersoll-Johnson and I am writing in opposition to HB1313 as it seeks to criminalize those engaged in the provision of healthcare, specifically abortion services.

As a patient who has sought a myriad of healthcare over more than 40 years from healthcare providers, I cannot express the profound importance of trust when accessing quality care. I need my healthcare provider to offer me all my health care options, to include medically accurate benefits and risks, and evidenced-based plans of care. Doctors should support patient care based on what is best for the patient, not on extreme, punitive laws based on ideology. If my health care providers are barred from offering the range of options available to me in any health care decision, I would be distrustful that I am receiving quality care and that my provider takes seriously her/his Hippocratic Oath. Without trusting my doctor, I am less likely to seek medical care at all, and I would not be alone. Caring for people means supporting their right to make medical decisions based on all medical options available to them.

Additionally, this bill flies in the face of human rights as defined in our constitution and would undoubtedly be challenged in court. The money the state would seek to squander in litigating such a bill, made worse in the midst of a pandemic which is causing people real economic hardships, would be better spent on any number of important issues such as food insecurity, mental health, domestic violence issues, support for small businesses and their employees, and education.

This bill, which would penalize people accessing and providing healthcare, specifically abortion, would not end abortion. I wonder if it is really about abortion at all. This bill seems more about criminalizing North Dakotans seeking medical care, their healthcare providers and those simply helping other North Dakotans. Historically, a strong North Dakota value is caring about each other. This bill is without question, not in keeping with such a value. We must respect all people and their ability to make their own healthcare choices. Instead of wasting money on this unconstitutional bill, let us instead spend it on evidenced based sexuality education and access to contraception, which research shows are key components in decreasing unplanned pregnancies and the need to access abortion care. That is, if abortion is really what this is about.

This bill is extreme, would hinder access to sound healthcare, taint the trust patients have in their healthcare providers, waste valuable tax dollars and would not prevent the need for abortion care. This bill is dangerous and hurts North Dakotans.