

Testimony in Opposition
HB 1313
House Human Services Committee
January 26, 2021

Dear Chairman Weisz, Vice Chair Rohr, and members of the Committee,

I am submitting testimony in opposition of House Bill 1313. This bill is blatantly unconstitutional, not to mention willingly ignorant of North Dakotans' views on our right to make medical decisions about our own reproductive health. In 2014, North Dakotans voted down the "Personhood" Measure 1 by 64%, making a clear statement regarding our belief in the right to choose.

I am here because my mom had a choice. Like many women in the 80s, advances in assisted reproductive technology allowed her to finally conceive. She and my dad had struggled for years, and were thrilled to finally begin their journey as parents. However, like many early recipients of assisted reproductive technology, my mom was told she was carrying multiple fetuses, and in order to ensure she had a safe pregnancy and that some of the fetuses and herself had a chance at survival, she would have to undergo multifetal pregnancy reduction.

Her whole life, she had dreamed of becoming a mother. It was not easy for my parents, but they agreed that it was too risky for my mother to carry five babies at once, nor would they be able to raise a family that size. She delivered my twin sister and me prematurely, but ultimately we were healthy.

Some would argue that the selective reduction procedure my mom underwent is abortion and that her decision makes her an unethical person. For our family and for many who have sought fertility assistance, it's a medical decision to be discussed with a doctor, not a moral one to be determined by the state.

My mom didn't tell us about her experience until the heated 2014 Measure 1 debate began. By then she had raised my twin and myself, our younger sister, and a niece. This year my twin sister had her first baby—a natural pregnancy that came with many risks, including pre-eclampsia. Reproductive health is complicated and cannot be seen in black-and-white. There are many circumstances in which a pregnant person may choose to have an abortion. My sister and nephew are doing fine now. I wish I could say I get to see them often, but like many young people, she and her husband left the state.

Had HB1313 existed in 1990, I would not be here. I think of all the brave women, like my mother, who would be negatively affected by the overreach of this language, and the stigma supporters of anti-abortion legislation force upon them. Should North Dakota pass yet another unconstitutional abortion bill, we'll continue to isolate the families that require access to full reproductive services. It will continue to reinforce the stereotype that we are an intolerant

community, unable to keep up with the times. I don't blame my sister for wanting to raise her family elsewhere. We have to do better to support reproductive rights for all circumstances.

I am asking you to give a "Do Not Pass" recommendation on HB1313.

Respectfully,

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