

I am writing this testimonial in support of HB 1147. My husband and I have been married for nine years and together we farm and run a cattle operation. In 2018 we decided to start expanding our family. After a year of trying to get pregnant and with no results, we were sent to reproductive medicine in the spring of 2019. This is when we found out that the only way we could get pregnant was thru invitro fertilization (IVF). There were two main factors that have contributed to our infertility: With myself, it was due to a severe case of appendicitis which lead to a ruptured appendix about five years ago. This caused scar tissue in my fallopian tubes. However, at the time of my appendicitis, I was never told this could lead to infertility issues. Furthermore, we found out my husband has very poor sperm quality. We have decided to go ahead with IVF, however it has not been an easy process. First, I had to lose weight to qualify for the procedure. But we would say the financial aspect has been even more of a challenge for us. I will say that as a state employee, I am grateful for the benefits that I do have that help with infertility treatment. However, now that we will be going thru our first IVF cycle in March, it is still costing us close to \$12,000. We have had to rely heavily on our families to help pay for this. We wanted to be able to pay for this ourselves, but due to our current financial situation, this ended up being our only option. To add to this, we are looking at probably being able to go thru IVF twice due to what the current lifetime infirmity benefits are right now with my insurance. This makes the IVF process even more stressful knowing that our chances to create a family are limited. I have mentioned the stress of this process several times. This has caused us to seek counseling to help deal with the stress of our daily lives, the financial stress of infertility, and all of the other emotions that infertility causes.

I also want to mention the emotional burden infertility has had on us. With myself, I have found my anxiety has become an issue for me. Not only do I find myself worrying about infertility, but worrying about little things that normally wouldn't bother me. Every time I see a baby announcement on social media or receive an announcement, I find my anxiety creeping back and I feel that all the work I have put into handling this is nonexistent. I also find myself feeling so isolated when I am with friends, whose friendships I value greatly, talk about the children and life as parents, and know I may never have what they talk about. These are all experiences I hope no one ever has to go thru. Throughout this whole process, I have realized that infertility is definitely not an easy journey for any couple to go thru, but with passing this bill, it can help ease the burden that comes with infertility.