

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

My name is Mary Rude and I am a senior in high school at Dakota Prairie high school. I am a 4<sup>th</sup> generation family farmer and rancher. On my family's farm and ranch, we raise cattle and organic turkeys. We raise and sell around 30,000 turkeys each year. My parents could not be here today, so I agreed to represent our family at today's hearing. We stand in opposition to House Bill 1371.

My family has been in the turkey business for 60 years. We have evolved over the years. We also participate in the Global Animal Partnership, which means our farm is inspected more often than most. It also means we get a higher price for our turkeys. We sell our turkeys to Northern Pride, Inc., a grower-owned cooperative in Minnesota.

I am my dad's right hand gal when it comes to day-to-day work on our farm. For our turkey operation, I help out with pens for the babies when they enter the barn, help make sure the barns are the right temperature as the babies arrive in March. I work to ensure the shavings are evenly spread and that the right amount of turkey's are in each pen. It is a lot of work to make sure the turkeys don't trample each other and receive adequate food. We are proud of the fact that we only lose two to three percent of our turkeys each year, because of how well we take care of them.

Like all farms, we face our challenges. Drought and blizzards cause have been hard on our cattle the last couple years. For our turkeys our biggest problems are predators and the avian flu also know as the bird flu. Another challenge is that to we have to go all the way to a co-op in Wisconsin to get our organic feed. If we could get organic feed closer to home, that would be a big benefit to our farm.

Corporate farming would not solve our challenges. I think it would hurt our farm. We take great pride in our work, and we're glad we have neighbors we can rely on. One of our biggest concerns is that this bill does not even require shareholders to be farmers or have any connection to the community. Those corporate investors won't go to our church. Their kids won't go to our schools. They won't value our local community the same way that my family and our neighbors do.

Our farm is proof that you can have a successful family-owned poultry operation. It's a lot of work, but it's work we're proud to do.

Thank you for listening to my testimony. I will stand for any questions.