

Chairman Ruby and Members of the Committee,

I am writing this testimony to express my opposition to House Bill 1373, which would have a significant and detrimental impact on the ability of North Dakotans to access vital reproductive healthcare services, including in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatments. I have been a nurse for almost 18 years, and for the past several years, I have been working at the only IVF clinic in North Dakota providing support and care to patients from across North Dakota.

Infertility is a medical diagnosis, and patients should have access to treatment of this medical disease. I have witnessed firsthand the profound emotional and physical challenges that families face when trying to conceive. IVF treatments have given many families the chance to experience parenthood, and this bill threatens to take that opportunity away. HB1373 defines an unborn child as a person at the moment of fertilization of an egg. Should HB 1373 pass, our clinic would no longer be able to continue providing these essential services.

We currently serve patients who have no other access to reproductive healthcare services in our state, and without this clinic, many would be forced to travel great distances, at significant financial cost, or forgo treatment altogether. These are individuals and families who are deeply invested in their desire to grow their families, and they deserve access to the healthcare services that can make that dream a reality. To deny them these services is to deny them a fundamental opportunity to build their families.

I urge you to carefully reconsider the implications of HB 1373, as it not only limits access to essential healthcare but also has the potential to cause long-term harm to the families who depend on IVF and other reproductive services. I ask that you vote against this bill and continue to support policies that prioritize patient access to compassionate and comprehensive care.

Sincerely,
Lorie Visness