

April 2, 2024

Sandi Sanford
Chair, North Dakota Republican Party
1029 North 5th Street
Bismarck, ND 58501

Dear Chairwoman Sanford,

With the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in June 2022, 24 states, including North Dakota, swiftly implemented strong protections for the unborn. Additionally, many states moved quickly to supplement their existing life affirming policies to support women and babies. North Dakota has led the way, with policies like tax credits for contributions to maternity homes and pregnancy help organizations (HB 1176), an extension of North Dakota Alternatives to Abortion funding (SB 2129), and an extension on TANF assistance for pregnant mothers (SB 2181).

North Dakota has also recognized the disturbing reality that a substantial majority of women who have had abortions were pressured into doing so. HB 1171, passed overwhelmingly in 2023, made coercing a woman into having an abortion against her will a class C felony.

In fact, according to a peer-reviewed study by the Charlotte Lozier Institute, over 60% of women who obtained an abortion reported experiencing coercion or pressure.¹ What CLI researchers found is that many of the women who were interviewed post-abortion felt they had no meaningful “choice” at all.

With this in mind, we are troubled that the North Dakota Republican Party is considering a resolution that supports charging women as “co-conspirators” in their own abortions. While we understand and support the desire to hold the abortion industry to account for their decades of destruction of human life, spreading lies and confusion, and putting profit ahead of the safety of women and children, **turning those women into criminals is not the way to protect the unborn.** Support for this resolution ignores the reality that many women are pressured into abortion.

In an open letter signed by over 70 state and national pro-life organizations in 2022, the pro-life movement’s opinion on criminal penalties for women for their own abortion is clear:

¹ <https://lozierinstitute.org/study-many-women-who-had-abortions-felt-pressured-by-others/>

“As national and state pro-life organizations, representing tens of millions of pro-life men, women, and children across the country, let us be clear: We state unequivocally that we do not support any measure seeking to criminalize or punish women and we stand firmly opposed to include such penalties in legislation.”²

Today we write to you to reaffirm that position in opposition to criminalizing or otherwise punishing women, and in opposition to the resolution before the North Dakota Republican Party.

While Joe Biden and the Democrats works overtime to ensure that women have only one “choice;” unlimited, unregulated taxpayer-funded abortion at every stage of pregnancy, the Republican Party must offer an alternative vision. An America where a culture of life is embraced, children are welcomed and loved, and women are supported through every stage of pregnancy, no matter the circumstances in which they find themselves. In short, a Pro-Life America.

We ask that you reject the Resolution 6 supporting the concept of implicating women as “co-conspirators” in their own abortion. The North Dakota Republican Party should instead redouble its efforts to protect women and children through the legislative process and join the Pro-Life movement in ensuring that women are served and babies are saved.

Sincerely,

Marjorie Dannenfelser
President, Susan B. Anthony Pro-life America

Mark Jorritsma
Executive Director, North Dakota Family Alliance

Carol Tobias
President, National Right to Life Committee

Kristan Hawkins
President, Students for Life of America

Jeanne F. Mancini
President, March for Life Action

Penny Y. Nance
President & CEO, Concerned Women for America Legislative Action Committee

² <https://www.nrlc.org/uploads/communications/051222coalitionlettertostates.pdf>

Brian Burch
President, Catholic Vote

Christina Francis, M.D.
CEO, American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists

Donna Harrison, M.D.
Chair, Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine

Nicole D. Hayes
Executive Vice President, American Academy of Medical Ethics

John Mize
CEO, Americans United for Life

Kristen A. Ullman
President, Eagle Forum

Bradley Mattes
President, Life Issues Institute

Timothy R. Head
Executive Director, Faith and Freedom Coalition

Thomas A. Glessner, J.D.
President, National Institute of Family and Life Advocates

Jor-El Godsey
President, Heartbeat International

Jeffrey Barrows, DO, MA (Ethics)
President, American Academy of Medical Ethics

Steve Ertelt
Editor, LifeNews.com