

March 20, 2024

The Honorable Melissa Wiklund
Chair, Senate Health and Human Services Committee
2107 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Paul Utke
Ranking Member, Senate Health and Human Services Committee
2403 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for Senate File 4602 as amended

Dear Senator Wiklund, Senator Utke, and members of the committee:

I met my partner, Bryan, in August 2020. He would understand if I didn't want to continue dating, he said; he was trying out for professional basketball teams come December and could be moving overseas. How much changed in just a few months.

On November 7, 2020, Bryan went to the emergency room for severe back pain. Hours later, he was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a rare blood cancer.

At the time, friends urged me to end the relationship. *"It will be too hard. He needs to focus on his health. You can't take this on."* Instead, I slept in the hospital recliner.

We were forced to talk about the big things right away: whether we wanted kids, how treatment might impact his fertility, and even what was realistic since there's no cure for myeloma.

This August—after receiving years of misinformation about Bryan's fertility from other healthcare providers—specialists at Mayo Clinic determined that our best, and likely only, chance of having our own biological children is through in vitro fertilization (IVF).

We are grateful that Bryan is alive and in remission. But our lives have been—and continue to be—colored by cancer. We bought a house last year that we're making a home, but it's solely in my name. We don't want to risk losing it if we fall behind on his medical bills. For the same reason, we grapple with whether marriage will ever be an option for us. Cancer shattered Bryan's dream of playing basketball professionally and bound him with chronic back pain that hinders his quality of life. There's no reason that it should also limit his—or any other cancer survivor's—lifelong dream of being a parent.

Fortunately, our current health plans cover IVF. But no matter where our careers take us, we'll always have to wonder: *Will this employer's plan cover IVF? Or will we have to give up another dream?* It's not lost on us that even this question is privileged; many Minnesotans do not have the same safety net.

Cancer patients like Bryan have already spent years fighting for their life. We shouldn't make them fight harder than necessary to become parents, if that's what they desire. Please support Senate File 4602.

Sincerely,

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