

Submitter: Aubry Hickey
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: SB491

As an Oregon resident who cares deeply about those struggling to build their family in our state, I strongly urge you to advance SB 491, which will help Oregonians build their families when faced with cancer or other conditions that can cause infertility. Oregon families need your support now.

My journey started 9 years ago. My husband and I had been married happily for 6 years. We decided it was time to start a family. We tried for over 2 years without success. I was diagnosed with Endometriosis and Polycystic Ovary Syndrome. Both of these diseases cause infertility and are not something I chose for myself. After a few doctor appointments we tried several medicines but were again met with disappointment and sadness leading to depression. The financial stress should not be a part of the stress of infertility, it's stressful on its own.

We reached out again to ask what was next. Insemination is what they told us. We tried once a month for three months, each time I was met with a negative test that would throw me back into mourning. Each month we had to get an ultrasound and do the procedure. Each month it cost us \$1000 out of pocket.

We looked into our options yet again. Adoption? That was upwards of 50 thousand after attorney fees and waiting for who knows how long.

Foster care? In my line of work (Corrections Deputy) I was concerned I would know the parents on a level I wasn't comfortable with.

At this point I was 35 and thrown into the geriatric category. I knew we had to make a decision quickly, or the window would be closed forever.

So we looked into IVF. The initial cost was \$5000.00 up front. My family got together and donated \$2500.00 towards our faith baby. This got us going but we still needed to get another \$25,000.00 loan. My husband was working as a Youth Pastor which is not a career that you do for the money. He decided in order for this to happen he would quit and learn a whole new trade, HVAC.

Every ultrasound, every shot, every trip to Portland, nothing was covered. We added our costs up and figured out we had paid about \$30,000.00 out of our pockets. Thankfully we had a successful pregnancy and now have a beautiful baby boy, Westley Reed. Our miracle baby.

So many things are covered by insurance that are optional, abortion being one of them. Infertility is not something I asked for or chose to endure. I have since been diagnosed with Hashimoto's which can also affect fertility. I would not have my kids without the use of IVF.

I need your support, along with the 1 in 8 couples in our state living with the disease of infertility and the thousands of Oregonians diagnosed with cancer during their reproductive years.

It is time for Oregon to update its insurance law on reproductive health services to include coverage for the standard of care for patients with infertility and those diagnosed with cancer or other conditions that may cause infertility. By passing SB 491, Oregon will join 19 other states across the nation that help hardworking families get access to medically necessary treatments while only minimally impacting insurance premiums, if at all. States with IVF insurance have lower rates of multiple births than states without IVF coverage, and lowering multiple births decreases overall health care costs and results in healthier babies and healthier moms.

Please support Oregon families by moving this pro-family bill forward. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Aubri Hickey