January 26, 2018

Senate Judiciary Committee
Room 105, Gressette Building
South Carolina Senate
Columbia, SC 29201

Re: Vote NO on S. 217, “Personhood Act of SC"

Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am the President/CEO of RESOLVE: The National Infertility Association, representing the 7.3 million American men and women – and more than 125,000 South Carolina citizens -- who face infertility. We at RESOLVE are greatly concerned about S. 217, which we recognize as "personhood" legislation to confer rights on microscopic embryos from the moment of fertilization.

By equating embryos and born human beings, S. 217 has implications that pose a serious threat to infertility medical treatment. If microscopic fertilized eggs/embryos are full human children, anything that puts an embryo at risk could be a violation of law, even if its goal is the undeniable social good of helping someone have a baby.

This law could impair or prevent doctors from practicing in vitro fertilization (IVF) in accord with the best standards of medical care, because it may be deemed to pose too great a risk to embryos.

Cryopreservation (embryo freezing) would change drastically: it might be outlawed altogether, or couples might be forced to transfer all frozen embryos to attempt more pregnancies.

Cancer patients whose only hope lies in freezing embryos could be prevented from having biological children.

ICSI, the treatment that has enabled hundreds of thousands of men to father children
they otherwise never could, could be deemed to pose a risk to an embryo and therefore unlawful. Assisted hatching and pre-implantation genetic diagnosis, all standard medical treatments that help people have babies -- these could very well be prohibited if S. 217 becomes law.

If lawmakers are serious about re-defining embryos as human beings, then women with uterine problems could be forbidden from attempting pregnancy with IVF because of the risks to the embryo of failed implantation.

S. 217 could take from parents the rights of disposition over their embryos.

The net effect is that S. 217 would chill the practice of reproductive medicine and would prevent couples in South Carolina with infertility from being able to have families. This legislation is anti-family and we urge thoughtful members of the Committee to step back and reflect on whether they really want to prevent American men and women from having the families they dream of.

We respectfully request that you vote No on S. 217 to show that South Carolina does indeed care about families. Please contact me at bcollura@resolve.org should you have any questions regarding our position. Thank you in advance for voting No on this bill.

Sincerely,

Barbara L. Collura
President/CEO