

Diocese of Manchester

The Catholic Church in New Hampshire

Understanding New Hampshire Abortion Law . . . and What You Can do to Help

Recent abortion legislation in other states has many asking about the laws in New Hampshire. This bulletin is intended to answer frequent questions and provide ideas for ways we can make a difference.

HOW FAR INTO PREGNANCY ARE ABORTIONS PERMITTED IN NEW HAMPSHIRE?

Abortions are legal and unrestricted and may be performed for any reason throughout pregnancy in New Hampshire.

HAVE ELECTED OFFICIALS TRIED TO CHANGE THE LAW IN NEW HAMPSHIRE?

Yes, but as recently as 2017 and 2018, the New Hampshire House rejected bills that would have provided protection for viable, preborn children.

DOES NEW HAMPSHIRE HAVE AN ABORTION NOTIFICATION LAW IN EFFECT NOW?

The state parental notification law requires a minor seeking an abortion to notify a parent or guardian or use a “judicial bypass” in which a judge determines she is mature enough to make her own decision. The law only requires parental notification, not consent.

HOW MANY ABORTIONS ARE PERFORMED IN NEW HAMPSHIRE EACH YEAR AND HOW MANY DOCTORS PERFORM ABORTIONS?

This information is not available because the state does not have an abortion statistics law, even though the federal Centers for Disease Control collects the data nationally and 47 other states collect and report this data. Bills requiring the collection of abortion statistics have been introduced many times, but all of them have been defeated.

DO STATE PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITIES INSPECT ABORTION FACILITIES?

No. There are no state laws specifically addressing the inspection of abortion facilities. The abortion providers determine what standards to use.

DOES STATE LAW PROTECT CHILDREN WHO SURVIVE ATTEMPTED ABORTION?

No. Children who survive attempted abortion are not entitled to any more care than the abortionist chooses to provide. A bill to recognize a duty to care was defeated by the New Hampshire House in 2016.

IS THERE A NEW HAMPSHIRE LAW THAT RECOGNIZES THE CONSCIENCE RIGHTS OF HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL WHO CHOOSE NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN AN ABORTION?

No. A bill to defend conscience rights was defeated in the New Hampshire House in 2018. No state law protects health care professionals from employment consequences for refusing to assist in an abortion.

HAS THE DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER ADVOCATED FOR UNBORN CHILDREN?

Yes. For many years, the bishops, other clergy, and lay people of the Diocese have strongly advocated for laws protecting unborn children. Among other efforts, we have frequently testified at the New Hampshire Legislature, communicated directly with elected officials, filed briefs in the Court of Appeals and United States Supreme Court supporting the state parental notification law, and annually send pilgrims to the March for Life in Washington, DC.



There are many things we can do to help turn a culture of abortion into a culture that respects and nurtures life, especially in its most vulnerable stages:

- **Know the facts about abortion.** The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops offers resources at its website at usccb.org at the Issues and Actions page. Want to know more? Read the abortion surveillance data and statistics directly from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- **Understand Catholic teaching about abortion.** As Catholics, each of us is called to continue to grow in knowledge and love of Christ and His Church – the journey of faith is lifelong! Visit usccb.org at the Issues and Actions page to read Church teaching documents on abortion.
- **But this does not mean you have to be Catholic to be concerned about abortion.** Laws protecting unborn children have been in place throughout our history. These laws have not been in place in one country or culture, nor did they originate from one religious belief. Instead, until recently, we have shared a natural instinct to care for all human life.
- **Share the message.** Knowledge is power, and many people do not know the facts about abortion in New Hampshire. Talk with others about what you learn.
- **Pray.** All of our efforts must be steeped in prayer, interceding on behalf of those affected by abortion and for the grace to build a culture that not only respects but reveres all human life.
- **Share Catholic teaching . . . and Offer Hope.** Abortion is a grave sin because it brings an end to an innocent human life. But as Pope Francis has explained, “there is no sin that God’s mercy cannot reach and wipe away when it finds a repentant heart seeking to be reconciled with the Father.” If you or someone you know is suffering after an abortion, confidential, nonjudgmental help is available through Project Rachel at (603) 663-0192 or visit HopeAfterAbortion.com
- **Vote.** Be informed and vote for elected officials who respect the right to life and who care about the health of pregnant women and their children. Consider running for office or encourage others to run for office who believe in a consistent ethic of life.
- **Work within your community** to create and sustain life-affirming options for women and children at risk from abortion. Contact your local pro-life pregnancy care center to learn practical ways you can help.
- **Stay informed** about New Hampshire legislation by registering for Catholic Citizenship News email alerts at catholicnh.org/ccn. Catholic Citizenship News focuses on what’s happening in New Hampshire, but you also will receive updates on federal actions, like the Born-Alive Survivors Protection Act.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

Visit catholicnh.org/abortion for additional resources.

