

DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

February 10, 2022

Via email only

Hon. Ned Gordon, Chair
and Members of the House Judiciary Committee
Legislative Office Building
Concord, NH 03301

Re: HB 1674 (Creating a Statutory Right to Abortion)

Dear Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee:

As the Director of the Office of Public Policy of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Manchester, and on behalf of Bishop Peter Libasci, I write to respectfully register our **opposition to HB 1674**, which would create a statutory right of “access to abortion care.”

The bill seeks to create an affirmative public policy that declares abortion “vital to the equality and liberty of all individuals.” It probably goes without saying that we could not disagree more strongly with this statement.

I suspect that most people in New Hampshire, regardless of political or religious persuasion, share a concern that the fundamental principles of human dignity and solidarity are beset by many challenges today. It seems hard to fathom how the work of building dignity and solidarity can be advanced by the passage of a law that would affirmatively declare certain human beings to be disposable. I ask the Committee to consider these important words of Pope Francis:

[The] defense of unborn life is closely linked to the defense of each and every other human right. It involves the conviction that a human being is always sacred and inviolable, in any situation and at every stage of development. Human beings are ends in themselves and never a means of resolving other problems. Once this conviction disappears, so do solid and lasting foundations for the defense of human rights, which would always be subject to the passing whims of the powers that be.

Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *The Joy of the Gospel*, 213 (2013).

I also want to highlight the full range of what this bill would sanction. HB 1674 would give approval to all abortions except those enumerated in the bill (namely, abortions prohibited under the Fetal Life Protection Act (RSA 329:44 *ff.*) and those which do not comply with the parental notification law (RSA 132:34 *ff.*)). This would bestow the state’s approval on, for instance,

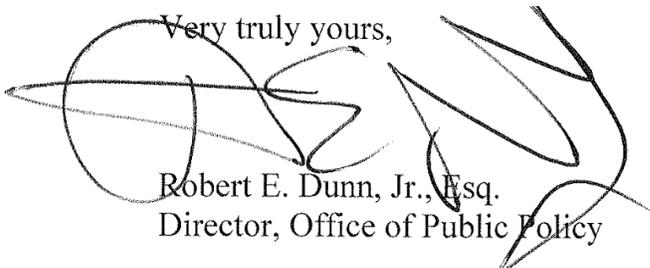
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abortions done for purposes of sex-selection, or abortions done because the unborn child is presumed to have a disability. Additionally, because it is not mentioned in HB 1674 as one of the exceptions, the bill also apparently seeks to implicitly repeal the New Hampshire ban on partial birth abortions (RSA 329:32 *ff.*).

For all these reasons, I respectfully ask that you vote to recommend ITL on HB 1674.

Thank you for your kind consideration of our views.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke, positioned above the printed name and title.

Robert E. Dunn, Jr., Esq.
Director, Office of Public Policy