

DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

January 22, 2020

The Members of the House Judiciary Committee
c/o The Honorable Marjorie Smith, Chair
House Judiciary Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 208
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: CACR 14 (“Relating to Reproductive Medical Decisions”)

Dear Rep. Smith and Members of the Committee:

As Director of the Office of Public Policy for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Manchester, and on behalf of Bishop Peter Libasci, I write to respectfully urge that you vote ITL on CACR 14.

I know I do not need to restate the views of the Catholic Church on abortion. The Catholic Church and legions of others who approach this issue from religious and secular perspectives alike believe in the inherent dignity of every human being, at every stage of life. This is why we supported the abolition of the death penalty last year for instance, and it is why we oppose measures like this CACR that would deny the smallest of our sisters and brothers, who have not yet been born, their right to life.

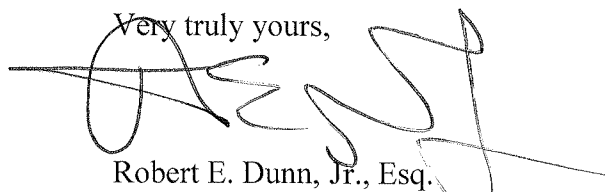
What the legislature decides to do on an amendment like this logically will have a resonance in other areas. Pope Francis, in his 2015 encyclical letter on the environment, wrote about this connectedness: “Since everything is interrelated, concern for the protection of nature is also incompatible with the justification of abortion. If personal and social sensitivity towards the acceptance of the new life is lost, then other forms of acceptance that are valuable for society also wither away.” Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si*, 120. This only stands to reason. If we want our society to respect and value the child who is a refugee, the child who is homeless, the child who does not have access to health care, then we need to respect and value the child in the womb as well.

I ask the Committee to remember just how far this amendment would go. The CACR would prevent the state from passing or enforcing laws that would restrict (or even simply “inconvenience”) abortion at any point during a pregnancy. Indeed, given that there are those who oppose legal protections for born-alive survivors of abortion, it would require no stretch of the imagination to see an attempt to deploy this amendment even in a case where a child has actually been born. The language of this proposal is so sweeping that it would even be contrary to the position held by those New Hampshire citizens who *support* the availability of abortion in the earlier stages of a pregnancy only.

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Accordingly, I ask the Committee to recommend that the House vote down this proposed amendment.

Thank you for your service and for your consideration of our views.

Very truly yours,

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