



DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

January 9, 2019

The Honorable Marjorie Smith, Chair
Judiciary Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 208
Concord, NH 03301

Re: HB 124 (Repealing the Law Relative to the Buffer Zones to Reproductive Health Care Facilities)

Dear Representative Smith and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

As Vice Chancellor of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Manchester, and on behalf of Bishop Peter Libasci, I write to support HB 124, a bill to repeal the so-called buffer-zone law.

In 2014, New Hampshire created a buffer zone around abortion clinics, only allowing certain individuals to be present within the designated area. The plain language of the bill was intended to silence the speech of those who oppose abortion, even though the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and Part I, article 22 of the New Hampshire Constitution prohibit our state and federal governments from creating laws that restrict speech based on its content.

We urge the committee to report HB 124 as ought to pass because this bill recognizes the basic right to free speech. Thank you for your consideration of our testimony and for your service to the people of the State of New Hampshire.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Meredith Cook".

Meredith P. Cook, Esq.
Vice Chancellor