

DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

February 3, 2020

Senator Tom Sherman, Chair
and Members, Senate HHS Committee
State House, Room 100
Concord NH 03301

Re: SB 741 (Born Alive Protection Act)

Dear Senator Sherman and Members of the Committee:

As Director of the Office of Public Policy of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Manchester, and on behalf of Bishop Peter Libasci, I want to register our support for SB 741, creating the Born Alive Protection Act.

This bill seeks to have New Hampshire join a number of other states that have put laws into place to protect babies who survive abortions. The Kermit Gosnell case is just one notorious example of what is happening in other places as well: babies surviving abortions, but being killed or left to die after they are born.

The views of the Catholic Church on issues relating to life ultimately are drawn, of course, from the perspective of faith. But the Church's views are based on reason as well. There are some things which our common human nature tells us are the right things to do in a particular situation, and these are really beyond the realm of debate, because it is basic human nature which impels us in that direction.

For that reason, it presumably is not controversial to assert that a newborn baby should receive (as this bill says) "medically appropriate and reasonable care and treatment". I suspect that no one would disagree with that statement.

So does the fact that the child is a survivor of an abortion change anything? A health care provider who happened upon a baby in distress would do all in his or her power to care for that child without regard to the circumstances of that child's birth. How that child came to be born would be an utterly irrelevant consideration. That this newborn baby is a survivor of abortion likewise is irrelevant. The pregnancy is over. The living child, now outside of the mother's womb, cannot be said to be anything other than a legally-recognized person entitled to the full protection of the law.

It is important to think about bills like this in the context of the way we want society to treat those who are in any way voiceless. As Pope Francis put it in *Laudato Si*, his 2015 encyclical letter on the environment (or, as he subtitled it, "Care for our Common Home"), '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'. (*Laudato Si*, 120).

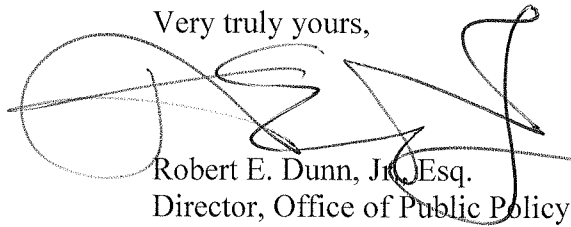
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Thus, if we want our society to respect and value the child who is a refugee, the child who is homeless, the child who does not have access to health care, then we need to respect and value the child who is born alive, whatever the circumstances of that birth. What the legislature does with a bill like this will have a resonance in other areas of society.

Therefore I respectfully urge the Committee to vote ought to pass on SB 741.

Thank you for your kind consideration of our views.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. E. Dunn, Jr.', is written over the typed name and title. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

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