



DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER
Secretariat for Administration

January 10, 2017

The Honorable Daniel Innis
Senate Commerce Committee
State House, Room 100
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: SB 11 (Prohibiting collective bargaining agreements that require employees to join or contribute to a labor union)

Dear Senator Innis and Members of the Senate Commerce 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 you concerning SB 11, the so-called "Right to Work Act."

The Catholic Church has long insisted that while it does not have technical solutions for every human problem, it does have a moral duty to speak out on matters that involve the life and dignity of the human person and the common good. As Pope Francis wrote, the Catholic Church's "social thought is primarily positive: it offers proposals, it works for change and in this sense it constantly points to the hope born of the loving heart of Jesus Christ." *Evangelii Gaudium*, November 24, 2013.

Since the late 19th century, the Roman Catholic Church has supported the right of workers to band together in free trade unions for the purpose of bargaining with employers. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers, owners, and others must be respected – the right to productive work, to just wages, to organize and choose to join a union, to economic initiative, and to ownership and private property. Workers, employers, and unions should not only advance their own interests but also work together to advance economic justice and the well-being of all.

Catholic social teaching supports the right of workers to choose whether to organize, join a union, and bargain collectively. Workers, owners, employers, and unions should work together to create decent jobs, build a more just economy, and advance the common good.

But while acknowledging this can be a challenge, the Church insists that a just economic order is possible. When the interests of both employee and employer are balanced, such that neither tries to damage the other and each cooperates for the advancement of justice and the common good, everyone prospers.



Therefore, as you debate SB 11, we urge you to keep the following questions in mind:

- Does SB 11 benefit the common good?
- Does it provide a just balance between the interests of workers and employers?
- Does it protect the natural right of workers to assemble and form associations?

We hope these insights are helpful to you as you weigh the merits of this proposal. Thank you 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.
Director, Office of Public Policy

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