



DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER
Secretariat for Administration

March 2, 2015

The Honorable Chuck W Morse
State House
Room 302
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

Re: SB 42 (Relative to Employee Notification of Contraceptive Coverage)

Dear Senator Morse:

As Director of the Office of Public Policy of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Manchester, and on behalf of Bishop Peter Libasci, I write to express our opposition to SB 42, a bill creating the first employment application notice requirement for private employers in New Hampshire.

Under SB 42, employers providing health insurance coverage through self-funded health plans that do not provide coverage for all contraceptive drugs and devices or their generic equivalents approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration must provide a "prominently displayed" notice of their coverage to applicants for employment on a written employment application or separate notice form with the application. The notice must specify which contraceptive drugs and devices are not included in the insurance coverage. SB 42's stated intent is to require employers to specify the details of contraceptive coverage to prospective employees, but based upon the text of the bill and testimony at the hearing, this measure clearly targets employers with religious objections to providing contraceptive coverage.

We are not aware of any other New Hampshire or federal law requiring private employers to include a notice of *anything* on employment applications. But if SB 42 becomes law, when individuals apply for jobs with Catholic parishes, schools, or institutions in New Hampshire, their first introduction to our ministries will be a "prominently displayed" notice of the diocesan insurance plan concerning contraception and abortifacients.

As a State, we have been reluctant to place restrictions on employers requiring these types of burdens – additional paperwork or particular forms at the time of hire. It is troubling that SB 42 would create the first mandate for employment applications that is clearly aimed at employers that decline to offer coverage that includes abortion or other life-denying drugs or devices that violate their moral and religious convictions.

Prospective employees interested in coverage of particular drugs and devices can obtain this information the same way they learn about any other coverage under a plan of insurance: they inquire. Every day, prospective employees in New Hampshire concerned about health insurance coverage speak with employers about plan coverages, benefits, and options. Many of these decisions concern coverages with far greater financial impact to applicants and their families than the subject of SB 42.

We urge you to vote **inexpedient to legislate on SB 42** because this bill is unnecessary and creates a first-of-its-kind restriction on private employers in New Hampshire that is clearly targeted at employers declining to offer certain coverages that violate their moral and religious convictions. Thank you for your consideration of our position and for your service to the people of New Hampshire.

Sincerely,

Meredith P. Cook
Director, Office of Public Policy