

DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

January 29, 2020

Hon. Marjorie Smith, Chair
and Members, House Judiciary Committee
LOB Room 208
Concord NH 03301

Re: HB 1678 (Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act)

Dear Madam Chair 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 write to register our support for HB 1678, the Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act.

It is well-known that abortion is being utilized around the world for the purposes that this bill seeks to defend against. Sex-selective abortions (chiefly in China and in India) have led to millions of fewer girls being born worldwide. Abortions end the lives of virtually all unborn children diagnosed with Down syndrome in Iceland.

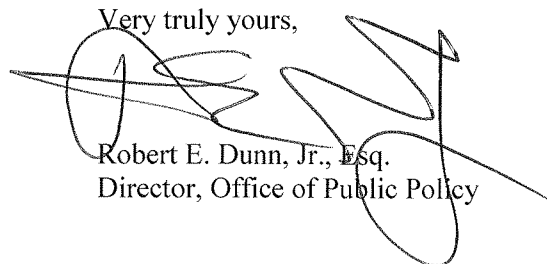
All of this is undeniably of a piece with the eugenics movement that was powerfully afoot in the 20th century. Although the eugenics crusade of course had its horrific apotheosis in Nazi Germany, it earlier had taken root in widespread fashion here in the United States - including in New Hampshire itself, which first passed a law in 1917 to permit the State to effect the sterilization of "certain cases of mental disease and feeble-mindedness." Laws 1917 Ch. 181. The US Supreme Court upheld the Commonwealth of Virginia's sterilization regime in the notorious case of *Buck v. Bell*, 274 U.S. 200 (1927), wherein Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes infamously wrote that "three generations of imbeciles are enough."

We rightly recoil from this language, and we know to our bones that these practices were utterly wrong. That reaction is instructive. To be sure, in the present day it is not the State that is mandating these abortions. But that distinction is irrelevant from the perspective of the populations that are being impacted. Whether the State affirmatively orders these types of abortions occur, or whether the State merely stands by and allows these abortions to take place, the end result is still the same as far as the aborted classes of children are concerned.

All people, at all stages of life and in all conditions of life, have an inherent human dignity that is inviolable. Thus, I respectfully urge you to recommend that this bill ought to pass.

Thank you for your kind consideration of our comments.

Very truly yours,



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