



DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

January 24, 2023

The Honorable Wayne MacDonald, Chair
And Members of the House HHS Committee
107 North Main Street – Room 205
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: HB 582 (Relative to Abortion Statistics)

Dear Mr. 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 582**.

The Catholic Church considers that the Church and the political community are autonomous from one another, but that the more they can work cooperatively together the more they will be able to advance the good of all, since “both, under different titles, are devoted to the personal and social vocation of the same people”. Second Vatican Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, 76. It is in that vein that we offer these comments on HB 582.

As this bill notes, the State of New Hampshire seems to be one of only three states in the country that do not collect statistics about abortions. There is no reason why New Hampshire should be out of step in this important area, and there are many reasons why New Hampshire should join the ranks of all those other states.

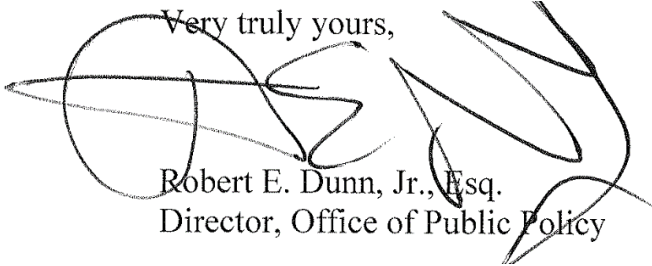
It seems obvious that the collection of these statistics would be helpful toward supporting mothers and babies and women who have had abortions. One area to single out is the effort to reduce teen pregnancy. Because we do not collect and report abortion statistics, we do not know if the teen pregnancy rate includes teens who have become pregnant and had an abortion. It seems incontrovertible that the absence of these statistics means the absence of fully accurate information upon which to target programs designed to prevent teen pregnancies or to provide other types of support. The common good is served, and human dignity is advanced, when we affirm and accompany those -especially mothers and children- who need our assistance.

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Obviously, the question of what the body politic should do on the abortion issue is and will continue to be an area of significant dispute. Let us be able to have that debate against the backdrop of the best available facts and evidence.

Therefore, we respectfully urge you to **recommend HB 582 as ought to pass.**

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Very truly yours,

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