



## DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

January 31, 2023

The Hon. Wayne MacDonald, Chair  
And Members of the House HHS Committee  
Legislative Office Building  
Concord, NH 03301

**Re: HB 565 (Expanding Postpartum Coverage Under Medicaid)**

Dear Mr. Chair and Members of the 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 respectfully register our support for HB 565. I would note that the expansion of postpartum Medicaid benefits to 12 months is supported by Catholic Bishops around the country because it is a pro-life policy.

The Catholic Church considers that, while the Church and the political community are autonomous from one another, “both, under different titles, are devoted to the personal and social vocation of the same people”, and therefore the more that both can work cooperatively together the better they will be able to advance the good of all. 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 565.

When the Diocese of Manchester reviews a piece of legislation, our inquiry begins with a look at how the bill affects human dignity and the common good, the two principles which are at the heart of Catholic Social Teaching and which, of course, also are the foundation stones of the body politic established by the state and federal constitutions. See NH Const. Part 1 Art.1 (government is “instituted for the general good”). We think that HB 565 unquestionably advances those principles.

Anyone who has been a parent or who simply knows a new mother can testify to the challenges of the first year of motherhood, and those challenges obviously are all the greater for mothers who are in financial need. HB 565 is an important way to support these new mothers (and indirectly their babies) at an especially critical juncture in their lives. As I think the proponents of this policy proposal have shown, the extending of



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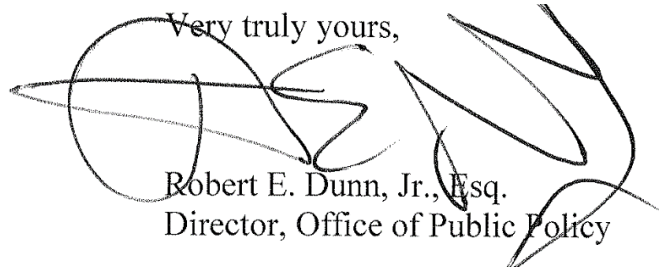
postpartum Medicaid coverage will provide critical public health benefits to this cohort of new mothers, especially in areas like behavioral health and substance misuse.

The family is the keystone of our society, and there are few ways that we can better serve the common good than by prioritizing the needs of mothers and their babies. Each mother whose health and well-being can be impacted by this measure translates into at least one more child who has the prospects of a better future than the child would otherwise have.

Therefore, I respectfully ask that you recommend ought to pass on HB 565.

Thank you for your kind consideration of our views.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert E. Dunn, Jr.", written over a printed name and title.

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