



DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

February 19, 2025

Senator David Rochefort, Chair
And Members of the Senate HHS Committee
State House
Concord, NH 03301

Re: SB 246 (Expanding Screening and Health Care Services for New Mothers)

Dear Senator Rochefort 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 SB 246**, which unequivocally should be seen as a pro-life bill.

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 twin principles which are at the heart of Catholic Social Teaching. As I have said before this Committee previously, however, these principles are not just religious beliefs; they also are the foundation stones of the body politic established by the state and federal constitutions (see, e.g. NH Const. Pt. 1 Art.1). SB 246 unquestionably advances those principles.

Consistent with its call to “radical solidarity” with mothers and children both born and pre-born, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has been advocating at the national level for Congress to address the maternal health crisis in our country and to place a high priority on policies that advance the health, safety, and flourishing of women, children, and families, especially those who are poor. Among the specific items raised in these advocacy efforts, the US Bishops have urged that women should receive comprehensive and high-quality health care in preparation for and throughout pregnancy, childbirth, and the post-partum period, including access to appropriate treatment for substance abuse disorders, mental health challenges, and post-partum depression.

SB 246 advances those same types of goals. This bill is a way to support new mothers (and their babies) at an especially critical juncture in their lives. As the proponents of SB 246 have shown, the expansion of services accomplished in this bill will provide critical public health benefits to new mothers and mothers-to-be. Indeed, I think it is self-evident that ensuring mothers have access to the services provided for in SB 246 will almost certainly be nothing less than a life-saving measure to some.

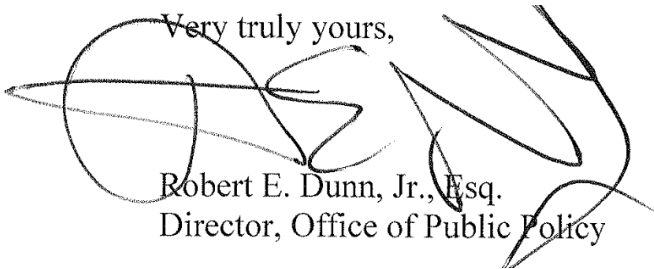
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As the bi-partisan array of sponsors of this bill demonstrates, one of the things that binds our body politic together is the recognition that the family is the keystone of our society. There are few better ways for us to serve the common good than by prioritizing the needs of mothers and their babies.

Therefore, I respectfully ask that you recommend ought to pass on SB 246.

Thank you as always for your kind consideration of our views.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke, positioned above the printed name and title.

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