



DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER
Secretariat for Administration and Community Affairs

April 17, 2012

Senator John Barnes, Jr.
Senate Public and Municipal Affairs Committee
107 North Main Street – Room 101
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: HB 1254 (Establishing a Committee to Study the Effect of Illegal Immigration on the State and its Political Subdivisions)

Dear Senator Barnes and Members of the Senate Public and Municipal Affairs 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 express our opposition to **HB 1254**. This bill purports to create a committee to study the effect of “illegal immigration” on the State.

The concern that the Roman Catholic Church has for immigrants flows from its profound respect for human rights, families, and the dignity of the human person. Each person, regardless of where they were born or their state in life, deserves respect and is entitled to basic human rights.

This charge of this committee, to study the effect of “illegal immigration,” is both vague and sweeping. Federal immigration laws are extremely complex, and those chosen to serve on this committee would have to become experts in immigration law in order to review this issue appropriately. The “study committee” contemplated under this bill is comprised exclusively of legislators without the benefit of the experience and knowledge of those in New Hampshire who work on immigration issues every day or who are themselves immigrants.

Although we believe that our immigration system requires reform, that reform is best addressed at the federal level. We urge you to report HB 1245 as inexpedient to legislate. Thank you for your dedicated service to the people of the State of New Hampshire.

Sincerely,

Meredith P. Cook, Esq.
Director, Office of Public Policy