



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

January 28, 2014

The Honorable Nancy Stiles, Chair
Senate Health, Education and Human Services Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 103
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: SB 270 (Establishing a Commission to Study Mental Health in New Hampshire)

Dear Senator Stiles and Members of the Health, Education and Human Services Committee:

As the Roman Catholic Bishop of Manchester and as a citizen of New Hampshire, I write to express support for SB 270, a bill to establish a commission to study mental health issues in New Hampshire.

Many of our brothers and sisters are affected by mental illness – by their own having been so diagnosed, or as caregivers, or as workers in the field of mental health. We recognize that the term “mental illness” is broad, but behind each diagnosis, we find the stories, experiences, and challenges faced by the individuals who are affected. While many with mental illness have been able to attend to a life of employment and education, others in our own communities struggle with loneliness, rejection, confusion, frustration, and anxiety. Homelessness and suicide also are significant concerns for those living with mental illness. The impact of mental illness is real, and the time to listen and act is now.

We, as a society, can play a significant role in promoting the mental health of all New Hampshire citizens by providing effective care, including health care. We can promote the dignity of persons with mental illness, welcoming all into our communities. I also encourage this commission, if created, to review current and potential efforts to educate New Hampshire citizens on mental illness through awareness programs which include prevention strategies.

I urge you to report SB 270 as ought to pass because we, as a society, should take seriously the concerns of those with mental illnesses and give careful consideration to the best course of action for New Hampshire to address them. Grateful for your consideration of these thoughts and with deep appreciation for your service to the State of New Hampshire, I remain

Yours in the All-Holy Trinity
And the Mother of God,

Most Reverend Peter A. Libasci
Bishop of Manchester