



DIocese OF MANCHESTER
Secretariat for Administration and Community Affairs

April 26, 2012

Senator Chuck Morse, Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
107 North Main Street – Room 103
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: HB 263 (Relative to the Time Limits for Assistance from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF))

Dear Senator Morse and Members of the Senate Finance 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 opposition to HB 263. HB 263 would amend current law so as to establish a lifetime limit of 36 months for assistance from the Family Assistance Program (“FAP”).

The FAP is a program intended to protect the best interests of children in households headed by adults who have a permanent disability, long-term obstacles to employment, or are over age 60. The program also provides assistance for children living with a non-parent caretaker relative. In contrast to the significant financial impact which this undoubtedly would have on the individual families affected, this bill would have limited on-going financial benefit to the State, if any. Indeed, according to the fiscal note developed by the Department of Health and Human Services, passing this bill would require a significant one-time cost to change the eligibility management system and revise existing forms and brochures. As explained in the fiscal note, the Department assumes many of the adults who currently have received benefits for more than 36 months would be eligible for a hardship extension, so it is not expected this bill will result in a decrease in expenditures for cash assistance. Moreover, families who cannot meet their basic financial needs through the FAP may seek additional support from their local welfare offices. Thus, this bill may result in further local expenditures.

This bill is contrary to good public policy both from a financial perspective and from the perspective of our moral values as citizens. Therefore, we ask that you recommend this bill as inexpedient to legislate. Thank you for your consideration and for your service to the people of the State of New Hampshire.

Sincerely,

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