



DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

April 12, 2022

Senator Sharon Carson, Chair
And Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee
State House
Concord, NH 03301

Re: HB 1609 (Fetal Life Protection Act)

Dear Senator Carson and Members of the Committee:

As Director of Public Policy for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Manchester, and on behalf of Bishop Peter Libasci, I want to register our opposition to HB 1609, and in particular the provision that allows abortions of children where there are “fetal anomalies incompatible with life”.

To this point, New Hampshire’s abortion laws have avoided designating certain categories of children as being liable to abortion. Of course, this is because the laws in this state tacitly permit the abortion of any child for any reason (with limited restrictions as to the timing of the abortion).

If the “fetal anomalies” language in HB 1609 were to be enacted, however, New Hampshire law would for the first time *affirmatively* state that *a particular category of children may be aborted*. Moreover, it is by no means clear what this new language actually means. What is a “fetal anomaly”? What is “incompatible with life”? It is the words on the page that will govern how this measure would be applied, and one cannot read this language without an eye toward what is happening in places like Iceland, where abortion ends the lives of virtually all unborn children diagnosed with Down syndrome. Putting language like this into law is especially problematic at a time when there are many who are quite prepared to say that those with a quality of life that does not meet certain standards are better off dead.

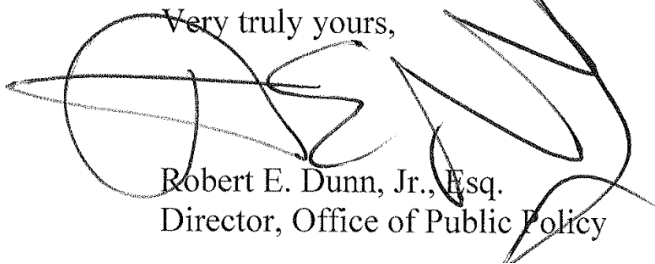
From the discussions in the House, it seems that there was a general assumption that the “fetal anomaly” language would only be implicated in situations which by all accounts are exceedingly rare. Without in any way minimizing the difficulty of this question, this language is not limited just to the rarest of circumstances. It could be applied far more broadly.

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Therefore, I respectfully ask that you recommend ITL on HB 1609. I note also that the ultrasound provisions in HB 1609, which we support, are addressed adequately in SB 399, which has already passed the Senate.

Thank you 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 over the typed name and title.

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