



DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

February 15, 2023

Hon. Robert Lynn, Chair
and Members of the House Judiciary Committee
Legislative Office Building
Concord, NH 03301

Re: HB 271 (repealing the Fetal Life Protection Act)

Dear Mr. Chair 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 **opposition to HB 271**, which would repeal the Fetal Life Protection Act.

Prior to the enactment of the Act, which restricts *some* abortions after 24 weeks, New Hampshire law essentially permitted abortions for any reason and at any point up to birth. This means that, were the Act to be repealed, the legislature would be reinstating a system which failed to recognize the interests of unborn children who have reached the stage of viability.

It should not be forgotten that in this regard the prior New Hampshire law went even farther than *Roe v. Wade* had. In *Roe*, the Supreme Court recognized “the State's important and legitimate interest in potential life” and determined that “[i]f the State is interested in protecting fetal life after viability, it may go so far as to proscribe abortion during that period, except when it is necessary to preserve the life or health of the mother.” Thus, by once again allowing abortion up to birth, HB 271 would actually be at odds with what *Roe* expressly allowed the state to do.

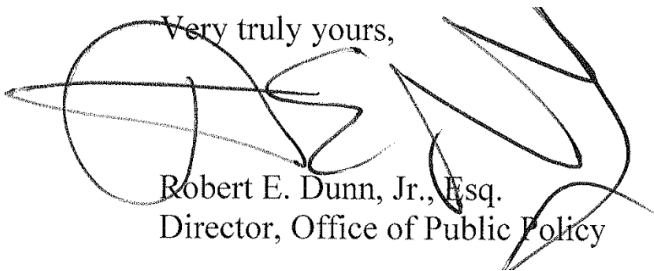
As you consider whether to reinstate a system that would remove protections for unborn children after 24 weeks, I hope that you will think about HB 271 in the context of the way we want society to treat those who are in any way voiceless. As Pope Francis put it in *Laudato Si*, his 2015 encyclical letter on the environment (or, as he subtitled it “Care for our Common Home”): “Since everything is interrelated, concern for the protection of nature is also incompatible with the justification of abortion . . . ‘If personal and social sensitivity towards the acceptance of the new life is lost, then other forms of acceptance that are valuable for society also wither away.’” (*Laudato Si*, 120).

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It stands to reason that if we want our society to respect and value the child who is a refugee, or the child who is homeless, or the child who does not have access to health care, then we need to respect and value the child in the womb as well. Therefore, I respectfully urge you to vote ITL on HB 271.

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