



DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

January 24, 2024

Hon. Carol McGuire, Chair
And Members of the House Executive Departments Committee
Legislative Office Building
Concord, NH 03301

Re: **HB 1324 (Natural Organic Reduction of Human Remains)**

Dear Madam Chair 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 write to respectfully register our opposition to HB 1324.

The Catholic Church considers that, while the Church and the political community are autonomous from one another, “the more that both can work cooperatively together, the more they will be able to advance the good of all.” Second Vatican Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, 76. It is in that vein that we respectfully offer these comments on HB 1324.

I should note first of all that while the Catholic Church certainly has its own teachings on what is appropriate with respect to the disposal of human remains, we are not suggesting here that the State of New Hampshire should take any particular action *because* that is what the Church teaches. Rather, we want to simply ask that as you deliberate on this bill you consider the principle that is at the heart of not just Catholic teaching but the secular body politic as well: the inherent dignity of each human being.

As you read the various laws and rules that govern the disposal of human remains, it is clear that they proceed from the basic proposition that those remains are due to be treated with respect. This is not just a consequence of the dignity which that person inherently possessed in life, but it also serves as a reminder of (and a reinforcement for) the dignity that all human beings possess. Thus, the way that we treat the bodies of our dead is something that also impacts the way that we look at living people.



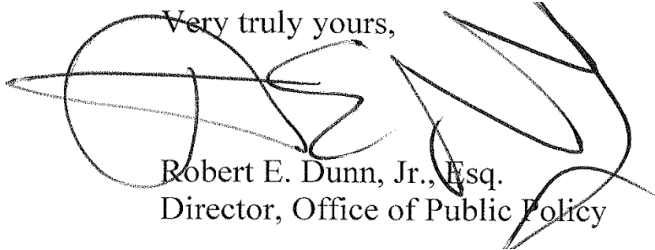
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This is why we oppose HB 1324. In our view, “natural organic reduction” of remains is a process that simply is not consistent with human dignity, especially insofar as this is connected with “human composting”. To treat human remains in a utilitarian way is to unintentionally reinforce the principle that living people may be looked at in a utilitarian way as well. In an age when the principle of human dignity is beset by many challenges, we should be attentive to ensuring that we promote human dignity and not detract from it.

Therefore, we respectfully ask that you recommend ITL on HB 1324.

Thank you for your kind consideration of our views.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. E. Dunn, Jr.', written over the typed name and title.

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