



DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

January 18, 2022

Via email only

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

Re: SB 399 (Repealing the Fetal Life Protection Act)

Dear Senator Carson 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 SB 399.

Prior to the enactment of the Fetal Life Protection Act, which restricts abortions after 24 weeks, New Hampshire law permitted abortions to take place essentially at any point up to birth. Thus, by repealing the new law, the legislature would be reinstating a system which failed to recognize the interests of children who have reached the stage of viability. It is worth remembering that in this regard the prior law went even farther than *Roe v. Wade* had, given that 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.”

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 SB 399 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).

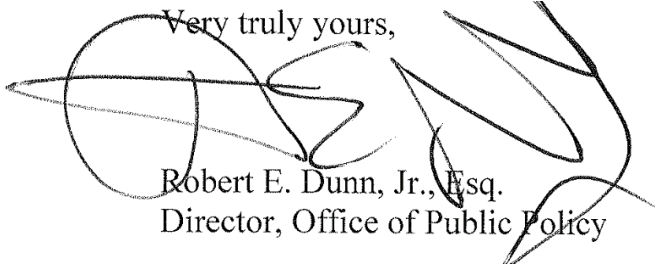
It stands to reason that if we want our society to respect and value the child who is a refugee, or the child who is homeless, or the child who does not have access to health care, then we need to respect and value the child in the womb as well. If society decides that certain ones of us can be considered expendable, we should not be surprised if society treats certain ones of us as expendable.

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Therefore, I respectfully ask that you vote ITL on SB 399.

Thank you for your kind consideration of our views.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke, positioned above the typed name.

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