



DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

January 4, 2024

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

Re: **SB 567 (Expanded Access to Chemical Abortions)**

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 567**, which seeks to expand access to chemical abortions.

As a threshold matter, SB 567 wrongly equates abortion with health care. Health care is care which is life-affirming and life-giving. Abortion, on the other hand, is the intentional ending of a human life. Killing is not health care, and it should not be referred to or treated as such.

In the same vein, we think that the use of the term “medication abortion” in this bill is inaccurate. “Medication” connotes something that is intended to manage a patient’s disease or illness. The chemicals at issue here, however, end the life of the unborn child, and they also can be dangerous to the health and lives of the pregnant mother as well.

On a more specific level, I want to note that it is not at all clear what this grant of power to DHHS actually entails. On p. 2 of the bill, lines 10-12, the General Court would simply be empowering DHHS to “*protect and expand access to critical medications for reproductive health care that are approved by the Food and Drug Administration, including, but not limited to, essential health care like medication abortion.*” (Italics supplied).

This grant to the executive branch stands in contrast to the way that the legislature has set abortion policy over the years (exemplified most recently of course by the enactment of the 24-week law and exceptions to that law). Wherever one comes down on any of these particular enactments, at least they have been the result of lengthy and involved debate and discussion *in the legislature*. This is where those abortion policy debates should continue to play out.



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Finally, I want to once again ask the Committee to consider the wider implications of proposals which have as their fundamental premise the principle that there are certain human beings whose lives can be considered to be disposable. As Pope Francis has put it:

[The] defense of unborn life is closely linked to the defense of each and every other human right. It involves the conviction that a human being is always sacred and inviolable, in any situation and at every stage of development. Human beings are ends in themselves and never a means of resolving other problems. **Once this conviction disappears, so do solid and lasting foundations for the defense of human rights, which would always be subject to the passing whims of the powers that be.**

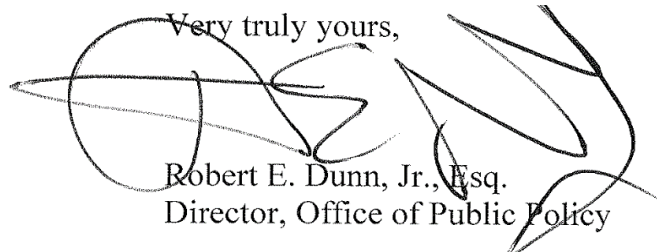
Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *The Joy of the Gospel*, 213 (2013).

The dignity of the young human being who needs food or housing or health care or refuge is inseparable from the dignity of the young human being in the womb. If we ask society to treat certain ones of us as expendable, we cannot be surprised if society begins to treat certain ones of us as expendable.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to recommend ITL on SB 567.

Thank you as always for your kind consideration of our views.

Very truly yours,

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

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