



Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland

510 Ocean Avenue
Portland Maine 04103-4936

Telephone: (207) 773-6471
Facsimile: (207) 773-0182

Suzanne C. Lafreniere, JD
Office of Public Policy

Comments of Suzanne Lafreniere, on behalf of the Roman Catholic Diocese

Written testimony in opposition to 1343–

An Act to Protect the Reproductive Freedom of Maine People by Preempting the Field of Abortion Regulation

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Suzanne Lafreniere and I represent the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland in opposition to LD 1343. The Diocese has a population of over 279,000 Catholics* or one-fifth of the total population of the state of Maine. In addition to its 141 churches organized into 48 parishes, it has nine elementary schools, one private elementary school, one diocesan high school and one private high school. It also includes one Catholic college, Saint Joseph's College of Maine in Standish. Within the diocese, there are also seven subsidized housing units, four rehabilitation and residence facilities, and two child-care centers. There are three Catholic hospitals operating independently of the diocese as well as Catholic Charities Maine, the state's largest social service agency, which operates as a separate corporation.

It comes as no surprise to any legislator or any member of the public that the Diocese of Portland vehemently opposes this law. Respect for unborn human life is the foundation of the Church's constant social teaching and social justice ministries.

Current Maine law is broad and expansive. In Maine, one does not need to be a doctor to perform an abortion; one does not need to have an ultrasound; abortion clinics are not required to have safety inspections; taxpayers are forced to pay for abortions; teenagers are not required to get parental consent, providers are not required to have admitting privileges at a hospital, in case something goes wrong; and there is no wait period.¹²

There are numerous other abortion related bills which will be heard and voted on this session. Taken in complement with each other, Maine will be a destination state for abortions. What a tragedy this would be. Maine is the way life Should be.

Please vote LD 1343 as Ought Not to Pass. Thank you for your time and consideration today.

*www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/state/maine/

¹ <https://www.maine.gov/ag/docs/Abortion%20Rights%20in%20Maine.pdf>

² <https://www.abortionfinder.org/abortion-guides-by-state/abortion-in-maine>