



## **Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland**

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### **Testimony of Suzanne Lafreniere, on behalf of the Roman Catholic Diocese** in opposition to LD 538

*An Act to Amend Maine's Prescription Drug Labeling Law by Allowing the Removal of the Name of a Prescriber of Mifepristone, Misoprostol and Their Generic Alternatives*

Senator Bailey, Representative Gramlich, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, my name is Suzanne Lafreniere and I represent the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland in opposition to LD 538. 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.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland advocates for enacting and enforcing laws that create safe communities and promote the common good. This issue is important to Catholics because as people of faith a primary concern is the moral and ethical considerations that should be at the root of our decision making. We all are created in God's image. We all—each of us--possess a basic human dignity. The Catholic Church teaches that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the underpinning of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundational principle of Catholic social teaching.

Catholics have considered universal health care a basic human right since the earliest of times. Jesus' ministry to the sick, injured and marginalized is foundational to our vocation of healing and establishing moral societies where all people are cared for. Christians understand their vocation not only to provide direct care to the sick and injured, but to advocate on their behalf to those responsible for the common good of society. Almost 100 years ago, the Catholic Bishops of the United States called for basic health care for all people and have consistently advocated for this ever since. Life-affirming healthcare is needed for all.

These medications can be used for abortion. Why should the provider's name be shielded from this act? This prescription should not be treated any differently than other proscribed drugs. The proponents of abortion consider it healthcare so it should be treated as such and held to the same standards.

I urge you to vote ought not to pass. Thank you for your time and consideration today.

\*[www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/state/maine/](http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/state/maine/)