



## **Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland**

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### **Testimony of Suzanne Lafreniere, on behalf of the Roman Catholic Diocese** in opposition to LD 1418

*An Act to Protect Access to Reproductive Health Care, Including Fertility Treatments and Contraceptives*

Senator Ingwerson, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Suzanne Lafreniere and I represent the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland in opposition to LD 1418. 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.

We urge the legislature to consider approaches that truly support women and families—by providing resources for mothers in need, education on natural family planning, and support for ethical medical care—rather than promoting measures that end innocent life or undermine the sanctity of marriage and family.

I urge you to vote ought to 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/)