



Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland

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

Written testimony in support of LD 771 –

An Act to Protect a Woman's Right to Withdraw Consent for an Abortion

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 support of LD 771. 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 supports this law. Respect for unborn human life is the foundation of the Church's constant social teaching and social justice ministries.

This bill establishes a pregnant woman's and a pregnant minor's right to withdraw the woman's or the minor's consent to an abortion at any time before the abortion is performed.

The bill makes performing or aiding in the performance of an abortion after the pregnant woman or the pregnant minor has withdrawn consent a Class C crime.

Ultimately, *abortion is an uncompassionate response* to a difficult pregnancy, one that pits a mother in crisis against her preborn child. A woman should always have the right to change her mind about an abortion and if an abortion is performed after consent has been withdrawn, there must be criminal consequences for the provider who disregards withdrawn consent.

There are numerous other bills which would expand abortion that will be considered and voted on this session. Taken in complement with each other, Maine will be a destination state for abortions. This radical expansion of abortion is harmful for women and must end. We pray and work for a day when all elected officials will support policies that protect all human life and provide life-affirming options for both preborn children and their mothers. Women deserve better than abortion.

Please vote LD 771 as Ought to Pass. Thank you for your time and consideration today.

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