



## 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 1614 – An Act to Require an Ultrasound and Certain Counseling Before 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 1614. 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.

Ultrasound requirements serve an essential medical purpose in that they diagnose ectopic pregnancies which, if left undiagnosed, can result in infertility or even fatal blood loss.

An ultrasound enables a healthcare provider to more accurately date the gestational age of a pregnancy. Accurate dating of a pregnancy protects a woman since the risks of abortion increase as gestational age increases.

Ultrasound requirements also ensure an informed choice because they allow a woman to see her unborn child as he or she really is—by seeing his or her form and face on a screen and also by hearing the heartbeat.

Ultrasound requirements promote the woman's physical and psychological health and advance the states' important and legitimate interest in protecting life.

Twenty-seven states maintain ultrasound requirements.<sup>1</sup>

Ultimately, *abortion is an uncompassionate response* to a difficult pregnancy, one that pits a mother in crisis against her preborn child. 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 1614 Ought to Pass

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

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.guttmacher.org/state-policy/explore/requirements-ultrasound>