



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

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

in support of LDs 253, 682, 886, 887, 1007

An Act to Prevent the MaineCare Program from Covering Abortion Services

An Act to Amend Certain Laws Regarding Abortions

An Act to Regulate Medication Abortions

An Act to Make Manufacturers Responsible for Proper Disposal of Abortion Drugs and Require a Health Care Provider to Be Physically Present During a Chemical Abortion

An Act to Update the State's Informed Consent Laws Regarding Drug-Induced Abortion

An Act to Require that Informed Consent for Abortion Include Information on Perinatal Hospice

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, 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 these LDs. 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 these proposed laws. 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; providers are not required to have admitting privileges at a hospital, in case something goes wrong; and there is no waiting period.

Human dignity stands at the heart of every issue. Surely no reasonable person could disagree that the state has a compelling interest in protecting the life of a born person. The same is true of an unborn baby. It is the proper role of government to safeguard and support all human life, not to facilitate or be ambivalent toward its destruction. These proposed bills are not only a legitimate and good expression of a government's proper role, but it is also the right thing for a caring society to do.

I strongly urge you to support these bills.

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