

February 4, 2021

To: Montana Senate Judiciary Committee

From: Matthew Brower, Executive Director of the Montana Catholic Conference

Re: Testimony in support of HB 171

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Matt Brower and I currently serve as the Executive Director of the Montana Catholic Conference. I speak on behalf of the Roman Catholic bishops of Montana.

I am here today to voice our support for House Bill 171.

The Catholic Church teaches that the intentional taking of innocent human life is always wrong and we believe that when a woman undergoes an abortion, lives are drastically and tragically altered and none more so than the unborn child. We hold, too, that women who choose abortion do not surrender the inherent dignity with which they, and every human person, have been endowed by God. Concern for their well-being cannot be an afterthought and cannot be contingent on the choices they make regarding their unborn child.

House Bill 171 reflects an essential concern for the health and well-being of women who choose abortion. Good medicine ought to always be patient-centered, and requiring a medical practitioner to be physically present and conduct an examination when providing abortion-inducing drugs should be beyond debate. So, too, should be the necessity of fully informed consent. Abortion is a life-altering decision and pregnant women considering abortion deserve to have complete and unbiased information about their unborn child, the various procedures and drugs employed, risks involved and the possibility of reversing the effects of a chemical abortion.

While we oppose all abortions, no matter the method, as long as they occur, the safety and informed consent of the women involved should be among our chief concerns and House Bill 171 furthers this goal.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, on behalf of the Montana Catholic Conference, I urge a “do concur” and thank you for your time.