



Diocese of Springfield

Office of the Bishop

Abortion is a very serious topic. I think we can all agree on that. In my 30 plus years of ministry I have worked with many women and men who experienced an abortion, either personally, as a family member or as a close friend. My experience is that it is difficult, and often brings pain, sometimes many years later. Most made the decision to have an abortion not because they had the freedom of choice, rather because they felt they had no choice at all!

At the recent signing of H.5595, dubiously named an *Act Prioritizing Patient Access to Care* (note the singular use of the word “patient” not recognizing the unborn child as a patient), Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey was surrounded by a group of proud supporters, many dressed in celebratory pink. The language used spoke of empowerment for doctors and families. I found the atmosphere of the bill-signing ceremony to be shocking and ill-advised. The decision to end the life of a baby, especially one who might survive outside of the womb, is a serious, heart wrenching and tragic option.

What does this say about a culture that applauds something that is essentially ending a human life? It reminds me of the gladiatorial contests in ancient Rome. As the defeated combatant lay on the ground, the crowds applauded and waited for Caesar to give the “thumbs up” or the “thumbs down”, to decide life or death. I make this analogy not to vilify those faced with painful decisions, but rather to speak about our culture at large.

Nature abhors a vacuum. Since our culture has removed any sense of the sacred or of God, human beings will step into that space. When objective truth is no longer recognized, and we become the definers of reality, culture begins to deteriorate. A cursory study of history is the only proof we need.

This legislation is not only a terrible, morally evil piece of legislative overreach, it also brings us to a very dark place where some human lives are not judged as worthy as others. The crafters of this legislative death warrant are not willing to give some unborn children the basic right to life, or even the ability to seek peer review, before engaging in the violence to the child in the womb of a late-term abortion. They have committed a “grave offence” as the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches.

It also puts Massachusetts in dubious company, being only one of 10 states allowing such unfettered access to an abortion right up until birth. It will make Massachusetts a destination that ends in the death of a human life, an abortion, without any second opinion or someone advocating for the unborn child. How is this possibly fair? It is not. It is clearly immoral!

I believe that many were unsure themselves, but caved into political pressure. Just consider the clandestine manner in which this bill emerged in the closing days of the two-year legislative session, with little if any public comment or review.

As reported by Boston Globe reporters Anjali Huynh and Samantha J. Gross in their July 31 article, “The Senate passed the bill Thursday on a 15-4 standing vote, meaning fewer than half of the chamber’s members weighed in and without a record of who voted in favor of the bill.”

The vote in the Senate was done without public knowledge, no roll call. Equally sad is the fact that many senators stood in the hallway so that they could later say that they did not vote for the legislation.

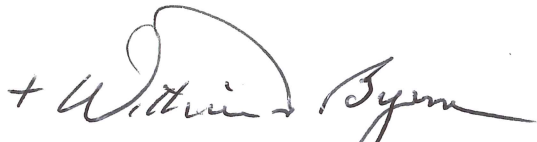
Not standing up for good, makes them equally as culpable as a yes vote.

While I find the secrecy disgusting, it's strangely gives me hope that not all are willing to give the thumbs down when it comes to life and death. Moreover, polls have shown a lack of widespread support which speaks to the reality that not everyone agrees that a child should be terminated at any point during a pregnancy.

Here in the Diocese of Springfield, we remain committed to walking with moms who face a crisis pregnancy, providing resources, support and affirmation that their baby and that they themselves have immeasurable worth. No one is disposable. I invite all people of goodwill to search their hearts for the truth, and to find the courage to stand for it.

Please don’t be distracted by the word games implying choice when there is none and by dressing this legislation up in pink. Not only are many lives and souls in danger, so is our society.

Find resources at <https://diospringfield.org/respect-life-office>

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William D. Byrne". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "W".

Most Reverend William D. Byrne

Bishop of Springfield