

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

March 2, 2020

Re: SB 727 (Holocaust and Genocide Education)

Dear Senator Kahn and Members of the Committee:

As Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Manchester, I write to express support for SB 727, a bill addressing Holocaust and genocide prevention education. I am grateful that Catholics in New Hampshire have this opportunity to stand in solidarity with all peoples who are the object of persecution and hatred, and especially with the Jewish people, who are, to use a phrase coined by Saint John Paul II, our elder brothers and sisters in faith. I thank Senator Kahn and the co-sponsors for introducing this bill.

That a bill like this is necessary is sadly evident. As Pope Francis noted in an address he gave in November, the world has “seen so many brutalities done against the Jewish people, and we were convinced that this was over. But today the habit of persecuting Jews is beginning to be reborn.” Through time spent with my brothers and sisters in the Jewish community, I am aware that we have not been spared from this evil in New Hampshire.

And genocides are being carried out today, even now. The suffering include targeted populations in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the Rohingya in Myanmar; and Christians in Iraq and Syria. It is undoubtedly true that, at this very moment, there are millions of people around the world who are targeted for death simply because of who they are or what they believe. We do not need much more in the way of proof that the lessons of the unprecedented atrocity that was the Holocaust have not been heeded.

It is fitting that this bill is brought forward in the year of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi extermination camps, because that connection shows the importance of remembering the historical events that occurred then and that continue to take place today. With issues as grave and broad as genocide and the Holocaust, it can be easy to become lost in generalities. The more that succeeding generations learn about the details of the historical record, though, the more they will understand the true realities of what happened in our past, what is happening in current events, and what could happen in the future.

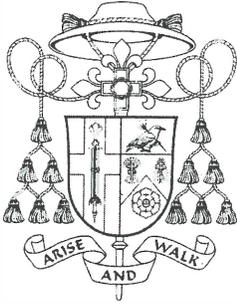
In 1790, George Washington wrote his famous letter to the members of the Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island, in which he stated that “the Government of the United States... gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance.” That letter closed with a prayer that I offer to you:

May the children of the stock of Abraham who dwell in this land continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants – while everyone shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree and there shall be none to make him afraid.

With deep appreciation for your service to the State of New Hampshire, I remain

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Peter A. Libasci, D.D.
Bishop of Manchester



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