

April 9, 2019

To: Montana Senate Judiciary Committee

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

Re: Testimony in support of HB 763

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Matt Brower [B R O W E R] and I currently serve as the Executive Director of the Montana Catholic Conference. I speak today on behalf of the Roman Catholic bishops of Montana.

I am here today to voice our support for House Bill 763.

The Roman Catholic Church consistently affirms that every person has an inherent dignity, value and worth. This dignity is not something earned by our good behavior but rather something we all enjoy by virtue of the fact we are children of God. It is imperative that society recognize, promote, safeguard and defend this dignity for all, with no exceptions.

The Catholic Bishops of the United States, in their statement *Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice* stated, “[W]e oppose the increasing use of isolation units, especially in the absence of due process, and the monitoring and professional assessment of the effects of such confinement on the mental health of inmates.”

House Bill 763 represents a significant step in the right direction and a prudent balancing of legitimate and important interests ranging from prison safety to inmate wellbeing and effective rehabilitation.

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.