

Thank You

This is what I would like to submit.

A Faith-Based Message of Support

James Merriam, Newport City

The rhetoric on this issue is very heated and there's a lot of inflammatory misinformation. I'd like to encourage and remind everyone to be clear that when you speak: you speak for yourself. Especially people of faith need to remember that they cannot claim to represent God, the Church Universal, or Christianity in general.

There is no Christian consensus against this bill.

Faithful disagreement is a part of Christian life and our communities, scriptures, and traditions are far from unanimous on this issues as on most issues. I've seen claims of demonic intervention in support of this bill. These inflammatory claim about the Vermont and New York bills do a profound disservice to our inter church and interfaith relationships. I know specifically that the harassment Rep. Brian Smith of Derby has received for his support of the spirit of the bill is also an embarrassing disservice to our faithful work and broader community.

Specifically I would like to remind everyone that the two largest protestant denominations in Vermont have both made longstanding commitments to support for Reproductive Coice based on faithful discernment over many years. And with only minor clarifications H.57 would be an important part of the legal safeguard of that commitment. Many other churches and settings of churches have done the same over many years and throughout our history.

Again: there is no Christian consensus against this bill.

The sanctity of decisions made over one's own body are affirmed many times throughout scripture and there are many who recognize this element in the incarnation as critical to our faith and society. The faithful voice is divided and can do much to help this discussion but must be respectful. So I ask all: please, speak on the issue, but speak for yourself.

Thank You