



February 5, 2025

House Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs Comm, Chair Rep Wayne MacDonald, Rep Rep Lisa Mazur, Rep Mark McLean, Rep Susan DeLemus, Rep Jim Kofalt, Rep David Nagel, Rep Yury Polozov, Rep Jay Markell, Rep Linda McGrath, Rep Lucy Weber, Rep James MacKay, Rep Gary Woods, Rep William Palmer, Rep Trinidad Tellez, Rep Jessica LaMontagne, Rep Tim Hartnett, Rep Janet Lucas

Re: HB 392 - Title: directing the dissolution of the department of health and human services' office of health equity, department of environmental services' functions for civil rights and environmental justice, and the governor's council on diversity and inclusion

Dear Chairman MacDonald and members of the Committee,

On behalf of the New Hampshire Council of Churches, I write to express our strong opposition to HB 392. we represent 7 denominations and over 300 churches in communities across the state. This bill raises critical concerns to people of faith who are called to uphold the dignity of all individuals, particularly those who are marginalized, and to advocate for policies that promote access, belonging, and the common good. This bill would strip away critical structures that ensure fair treatment and access to essential services for vulnerable populations, including people with disabilities, immigrants, low-income communities, and communities of color.

Throughout scripture and faith traditions, we are commanded to care for the sick, welcome the stranger, and seek justice for the oppressed. The Office of Health Equity plays a vital role in ensuring that all Granite Staters—regardless of race, income, disability, or background—have access to healthcare. Similarly, environmental justice protections ensure that no community, particularly those already facing systemic inequities, is disproportionately harmed by pollution or environmental hazards. The Governor's Council on Diversity and Inclusion has been instrumental in advancing policies that reflect our shared commitment to dignity, fairness, and belonging. Dismantling these critical entities would disproportionately harm those already at risk and contradicts our moral and ethical obligations to serve the most vulnerable.

I will also point out that each of these structures has the secondary if not a primary effect of improving access to stable employment for the populations of Granite Staters including people with disabilities, immigrants, and communities of color. By ensuring equitable healthcare, protecting communities from environmental harm, and fostering inclusive workplaces, these offices help individuals secure and maintain meaningful employment—allowing more Granite Staters to become productive, tax-paying members of society. Dismantling them would leave unnecessary obstacles in place for these workers thereby undermining the state's economic stability by reducing workforce participation and tax revenue.

We urge the legislature to reject this bill and instead work toward strengthening, not weakening, the structures that protect equal access and justice in New Hampshire. The faith community stands ready to partner in efforts that build a more just and inclusive Granite State—one where all people, regardless of background or ability, can thrive. We ask you to uphold the fundamental values of fairness, compassion, and the common good by voting ITL on HB 392.

In faith and service,

Lisa D. Beaudoin, Executive Director, NH Council of Churches