

## Minnesota State Senate Testimony

10 January 2023

I am Chad Zielinski, the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of New Ulm. I am the “new kid on the block” as I recently moved from Alaska. After retiring as an Air Force Chaplain of 21 years, for the past 8 years I had the honor to travel to 37 in remote villages walking my Native Alaskan brothers and sisters and witnessing firsthand their centuries held way of living intimately close to nature and thanking the Creator for everything: tundra berries, fish, a bird, a moose, or a new family member. Seeing all of creation as a sacred gift will be forever etched in my heart, mind and soul.

As I make my way around the 15 counties of the Diocese of New Ulm, visiting with numerous farming families, I see an extremely similar connectedness to the earth and our Creator. Their livelihood is profoundly dependent on the ebb and flow of the cycles of agriculture and farm animals providing new life. This living close to the earth and respecting creation from the hands of the Creator has been passed along for many generations. It is in their DNA.

I am testifying today on behalf of my brother bishops of the Minnesota Catholic Conference and the thousands of rural farming families of the Diocese of New Ulm to urge you to vote no on Senate File 1.

The bill reflects a complete denial of the humanity of the unborn child, their right to live and the state's interest in protecting nascent human life. The bill puts Minnesota out of step with most of the world in that regard, and, as you will hear from others, will also put women's health and safety in jeopardy.

Furthermore, the good people of these rural counties, whatever their religion, are prevented by subdivision 5 of this bill from keeping abortion providers, including mobile ones such as Just the Pill, from operating in their communities. Please protect a democratic process, reflecting a genuine pluralism of values among the people of our state. Again, please vote no.

I thank you for your time and thank you for listening!