SENATE JUDICIARY
Exhibit No. 9
Date: 3/25/15
Bill No. HB587

March 25, 2015

To: Montana Senate Judiciary Committee

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

Re: Testimony in support of HB 587

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 on behalf of the two Roman Catholic bishops in Montana from the Diocese of Helena and the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings.

I am here today to voice our support for House Bill 587.

The Catholic Church teaches that the intentional taking of innocent human life is always wrong and we believe that when a woman undergoes an abortion, lives are drastically and tragically altered and none more so than the unborn child. We hold, too, that women who choose abortion do not surrender the inherent dignity with which they, and every human person, have been endowed by God. Concern for their well-being cannot be an afterthought and cannot be contingent on the choices they make regarding their unborn child.

House Bill 587 reflects an essential concern for the health and well-being of women who choose abortion. Good medicine, including telemedicine, ought to always be patient-centered and requiring a medical practitioner to be physically present when performing an abortion is not inconsistent with the desire to expand telemedicine.

Though it provides a level of convenience, the mechanical and impersonal nature of telemedicine suggests its utilization for the provision of abortion services is not adequately patient-centered. The provider is unable to conduct a physical exam at the time of the service and would seemingly be poorly positioned to adequately assess potentially relevant circumstances surrounding the pregnancy. Additionally, a woman receiving such services is likely to be unfamiliar with the abortion provider and the drugs she will receive and possible side-effects.

While we oppose all abortions, no matter the method, as long as they occur, the safety and informed consent of the women involved should be among our chief concerns and House Bill 587 furthers this goal. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, on behalf of the Montana Catholic Conference, we urge a "do pass" and thank you for your time.