

President Obama's HHS Mandate Sparks Nationwide Demonstrations

Pro-Life and Religious Groups To Gather at Federal Buildings March 23 in Defense of Religious Liberty

Contact: Tom Ciesielka, 312-422-1333, tc@tcpr.net

Chicago, Illinois—The controversy over President Obama's HHS Mandate is now pouring out onto the streets. On March 23, concerned citizens in over 50 cities—including Washington D.C., New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and San Francisco—will gather at Federal Buildings for a rally with the theme “Stand Up for Religious Freedom—Stop the HHS Mandate!”

Thousands of Americans of all faiths are expected to participate in these rallies, organized by Citizens for a Pro-Life Society and the Pro-Life Action League to oppose the new mandate from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that requires all employers provide free contraceptives, sterilization and abortion-inducing drugs through their health plans. Religious leaders and other public figures will speak out against the HHS Mandate.

The HHS provided a “religious exemption” so narrow that it would exclude Catholic hospitals, universities and charities, forcing these institutions to act in direct opposition to Catholic teaching through the health care plans they provide.

“With the HHS Mandate, the Obama administration has presumed upon itself the authority to decide what counts as a religious institution in this country,” said Eric Scheidler, executive director of the Pro-Life Action League. “This is an unprecedented attack on the free exercise of religious faith protected by the First Amendment.”

“The Obama mandate is a complete affront to religious liberty,” said Monica Miller, director of Citizens for a Pro-Life Society. “Persons of faith or no faith at all should be alarmed at Obama's riding rough-shod over the conscience of American citizens. We are calling on all people of good will to rise up and vigorously oppose this ruling.”

Scheidler and Miller have formed the Stand Up for Religious Freedom Coalition, comprising dozens of local and national pro-life and pro-family organizations, to fight the HHS Mandate through direct action. The Coalition declares:

1. We protest the federal government's definition of what constitutes a religious institution through the narrowly constructed “exemption” to the HHS Mandate, a definition which is both false and beyond the federal government's authority to make.
2. We protest the fact that religious institutions, even after President Obama's so-called “accommodation,” are being forced to facilitate contraception, sterilizations and abortion-inducing drugs through the health plans they are mandated to provide.

3. We protest that the Mandate forcing all businesses—not just religious institutions—to provide coverage of contraception, sterilizations and abortion-inducing drugs, if even doing so violates to their own moral convictions on these matters.
4. We protest the HHS Mandate because, in requiring all health plans to provide free contraception, sterilization and abortion-inducing drugs as “preventative care,” it treats pregnancy and childbirth as a disease.

A list of coalition members and more information about the Nationwide Rally for Religious Freedom, including rally sites coast to coast, can be found at StandUpForReligiousFreedom.com.

Contact Monica M. Miller: 248-444-9096, mmmillerlife@gmail.com

Contact Eric J. Scheidler: 773-251-8792, eric@prolifeaction.org

About the Pro-Life Action League

The Pro-Life Action League was founded by Joe Scheidler in 1980 with the aim of saving babies from abortion through direct action. Not content to await a political or judicial solution to abortion, the League seeks to stop the killing of unborn children right now through all available peaceful means, including public protest, sidewalk counseling, education, youth outreach and national leadership.

About Citizens for a Pro-life Society

Citizens for a Pro-life Society is an activist organization, founded on Catholic principles of morality and social justice, dedicated to advocacy of the sanctity of human life, especially protection of the right to life of unborn children. They organize public demonstrations, educational programs, literature distribution, and conferences, and offer mothers in crisis pregnancy material and spiritual aid. For more information, go to www.prolifesociety.com

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