



Dear Speaker Boehner and Leader Cantor:

The undersigned pastors and Christian leaders write to raise serious concerns over what some have called the "HHS mandate" or "contraceptive mandate" contained in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) June 28, 2013 final rule. This rule mandates that all health insurance plans in the individual and group market cover all FDA approved "contraceptive methods and sterilization procedures," including drugs and other devices that can destroy life in its early stages.

This mandate was not necessary nor warranted under the provision of "preventive care services for women" contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, otherwise known as Obamacare. Worse still is the fact that the mandate essentially ignores the conscience rights of many Americans of religious faith. Our country was founded on certain freedoms, the first of which is the freedom of religion. The ability of a religious person to follow their conscience is not only a God-given right; it has long been a protected right for Americans. It is unfathomable to think of this country denying religious freedoms to her citizens.

The final rule issued June 28, 2013 by the Administration grants a narrow exemption to houses of worship, but the fact remains that the vast majority of religious organizations and businesses will be required to choose between violating their consciences and dropping their health coverage for employees. This mandate is all the more egregious in that it includes drugs and devices that are known, and scientifically shown, to function in ways that can cause abortion both before and after implantation. Several varieties of the morning-after-pill covered by this mandate have this abortive result. The conscience rights of those who object to coverage of such drugs is clearly violated by the Administration's action.

Due to the significant opposition to this mandate, many people of faith had hoped that the Administration would protect the conscience rights of all people who have moral or religious objections to covering contraceptives, abortion inducing drugs and sterilization procedures. Tens of thousands of comments have been submitted to HHS urging conscience protections be included in the various rule proposals. In the end, however, the Administration's offer of a so-called "accommodation" fails to protect individuals, businesses and non-profit organizations.

The "contraceptive mandate" with the requirement that there be no co-pay to the patient means millions of Americans will incur the additional cost for these drugs and devices. Regardless of the accounting gimmicks in the final rule designed to shift costs to insurers, employers are still mandated to be the legal gateway to coverage that violates their religious freedom. Forcing religious entities into this position is a severe blow to our religious liberty. Thomas Jefferson drafted the Virginia Act for Establishing Religious Freedom in 1779; it passed in 1786 and set the stage for the First Amendment to the Constitution. In it Jefferson states: "to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves, is sinful and tyrannical."

Consequently, we ask that you attach the "Health Care Conscience Rights Act" (H.R. 940) led by Rep. Diane Black, R.N., Rep. John Fleming, M.D., and Rep. Jeff Fortenberry to upcoming must-pass legislation to restore respect for conscience in health care.

Cc:

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Majority Whip
The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Chair, House Republican Conference
The Honorable Hal Rogers, Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Jack Kingston, Chair, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
The Honorable Fred Upton, Chairman, House Energy and Commerce Committee
The Honorable Joe Pitts, Chair, House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health

Signed by:

Trinity Evangelical Church, North Reading MA
Benton Bible Chapel, Woodsville NH
Dr. Robert Leland, Presque Isle ME
Pastor Albert Tartaglino, Riverton CT
Pastor Steve Skystimas, Waterbury CT
Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Dekker, Hawthorne NJ
Pastor Wong Young, Absecon NJ
New Jersey State Council Knights of Columbus,
Trenton NJ
Mr. Randall W. Martin, Bayville NJ
Reverend Eleanor J Edwards, Piscataway NJ
Mr. Fred Cosh, Middletown NY
Mrs. Desiree Bernstein, Brooklyn NY
Massena Pilgrim Holiness Church, Massena NY
Lindley Community Church, Lindley NY
Mrs. Diane Moder, Pittsburgh PA
Pastor Thomas Lawrence, Jeannette PA
Smithtown Community Church, Falls Creek PA
Christ Bible Church of Cranberry, Evans City PA
Mr. Michael Courtwright, Elkins WV
Lakedale Church of God, Fayetteville NC
Theresa Burleson, Asheville NC
Tony Foster, Greenwood SC
Mr. Larry Tolbert, Cedartown GA
McDonough Christian Church, Hampton GA
Moon's Grove Baptist Church, Colbert GA
Mrs. Katherine Negrini, Port Orange FL
St. Joseph Catholic Church, Jacksonville FL
Pastor Henry Fullington, Bascom FL
Reverend Kent Keller, Miami FL

Mr. and Mrs. Irvin L. Coleman, Erie PA
Pastor Sandra Baney, Dauphin PA
Alan Hontz, Hershey PA
Mrs. Chavva Yurkonis, Lebanon PA
Mr. Edwrd Mann Jr., York PA
Mr. and Mrs. Donald Grant, Lock Haven PA
Mrs. Patricia Muniz, Muncy PA
Mr. Benny Matthew Gover, Washington DC
Christian Life Center, Riverdale MD
Faith, Hope & Love, Inc., Marriottsville MD
Chaplain Linda Kendall, Berlin MD
Mr. Richard Moyers, Woodstock VA
Mrs. Patricia Fertich, Jetersville VA
Jerusalem Baptist Church, Quinton VA
Mr. and Mrs. Mark Racheau, Richmond VA
Patrick Springs Christian Church, Collinsville VA
Crossroads Church, New Martinsville WV

Reverend Gilliam Gordon Jr., Middlesex NC
Mr. Phillip Oakley, Morganton NC
Pastor and Mrs. Richard Lister, Anderson SC
Mr. Bart Peacher, Fort Mill SC
Reverend James Lester, Woodstock GA
Mrs. Regina Steptoe, Soperton GA
Pastor John Townsend, Ashburn GA
Mr. Richard Keene, Edgewater FL
Pastor Barrett M Lampp, Tallahassee FL
Pastor Earon James, Pensacola FL
Mr. Martin Towne, Fort Myers FL



Signed by:

Diplomat Wesleyan Church, Cape Coral FL

Mrs. Marilyn R. Staley, Dunedin FL

Mr. Monty Fods, Wadley AL

Walter Hill Baptist Church, Smyrna TN

Collegedale Church, Collegedale TN

Eagles Nest Christian Fellowship, Memphis TN

Gene Kelley, Iron City TN

Susan Rodriguez, Brandon MS

Evangel Temple Assembly of God, Lucedale MS

Pastor Danny Avery, Columbus MS

Jann James, Louisville KY

**Flat Lick Cumberland Presbyterian Church,
Hopkinsville KY**

Grove City Church of God, Grove City OH

Pastor Bobby Isaacs, Cleveland OH

Middle Sandy EP Church, Homeworth OH

Pastor Douglas Beggs, Willard OH

Lebanon House of Praise, Lebanon OH

Monroe Church of the Nazarene, Monroe OH

Living Hope Ministries, Minneapolis MN

Pastor Logan Almy, Duluth MN

Pastor Greg Lawrence, Mankato MN

Pastor Brandon Bellomo, Pierz MN

New Hope Church, Timber Lake SD

Kankakee Valley Family Church, Bradley IL

Mr. Mike Steffen, Moline IL

Pastor Thomas Willcox, Branson MO

Lawrence Heights Christian Church, Lawrence KS

Living Word Christian Church, Mulvane KS

The Way Christian Center, Hammond LA

Hardin UMC, Sidney OH

Reverend Thomas Emery, Venedocia OH

Pastor and Mrs. Neal Brown, Lapel IN

Pastor Ron Meyer, Fairmount IN

Becky Benz, North Manchester IN

Mr. David Voyles, Salem IN

Reverend and Mrs. Daniel Bloesch, Attica IN

Mrs. Judith Borisen, Sterling Heights MI

Calvary Bible Church, Kalamazoo MI

Lisa Ulman, Scotts MI

Path of Life Ministries, Ludington MI

Pastor Aaron Jameson, Des Moines IA

St. Thomas Lutheran Church, Marcus IA

Pastor Ronald Stehr, Red Wing MN

Hope Church, Rosemount MN

Reverend Bart Moseman, Saint Paul MN

Pastor Howard Googins, Saint Paul MN

Dr. Joshua Moon, Minneapolis MN

Ms. Natalie Hodapp, Mankato MN

In His Service Ministry, Little Falls MN

Reverend and Mrs. Harry Koops, Platte SD

Dr. and Mrs. Donald D. Van Etten, Rapid City SD

Pastor and Mrs. Jason McClenthen, Loves Park IL

Ridgeview Baptist Church, Danville IL

Erik Jackson, Ozark MO

Dr. Gary Parkhurst, Overland Park KS

Fran Cupples, Fullerton NE

Mr. Gordon Labauve III, Addis LA



Signed by:

Mr. James Bryant, Harrison AR
Ms. Leona Krause, Ringwood OK
Grace Baptist Church, Durant OK
Pastor Cleve Clark, Waxahachie TX
Mrs. Rachel Rice, Longview TX
Church Fellowship International, Henderson TX
Comyn Baptist, De Leon TX
Pastor and Mrs. Jerry Maston, Eastland TX
Ms. Shirley Hobbs, Eastland TX
Pastor Ron Burrow, Katy TX
Maggie Svoboda, Canyon Lake TX
Mr. Leon Durbin, San Antonio TX
Mr. James Allen, Round Rock TX
Mr. Charles Reeder, Westminster CO
Mrs. Betty K. Foley, Englewood CO
Church Of God In Christ, Denver CO
Pastor Gary Van Gorp, Greeley CO
Mr. Timothy E. Stuehmeyer, Colorado Springs CO
Shepherd of the Valley Church - LCMS, Oceanside CA
Calvary Chapel Rialto, Rialto CA
Pastor Robert McCulley, Hemet CA
Los Osos Christian Fellowship, Los Osos CA
Dr. and Mrs. Ernest Williams, Reedley CA
Pastor and Mrs. David Sawkins, San Jose CA
Pastor Timothy Molter, Chico CA
Soul's Harbor Nazarene Church, Woodburn OR
Hands of Grace Deaf Church, Cambridge VT
Nash Road Free Methodist Church, North Tonawanda NY
Beech Creek Wesleyan Church, Beech Creek PA

Mrs. Susan Turner, Colorado Springs CO
Reverend Brad Saffell, Sheridan WY
Miss Virginia Gomez, Kanab UT
Community Church of Joy, Phoenix AZ
Wenden Bible Church, Wenden AZ
Mr. Art Reynolds, Goodyear AZ
Mrs. Peggy Michaels, Oracle AZ
Mike Alameda, Tucson AZ
Mrs. Robin Mercer, Taylor AZ
Hoffmantown, Albuquerque NM
Emmanuel Ministries Int'l, Albuquerque NM
Mrs. Kim Bensfield, Rancho Palos Verdes CA
Pastor and Mrs. Joel Biangco, Carson CA
Mrs. Rose Biangco, Carson CA
Mr. Fernando Gonzalez, Pasadena CA
Adam Noritake, Diamond Bar CA
Mrs. Robin Knapp, Upland CA
Paula Lange, San Diego CA
Ms. Mary Johnson, San Bernardino CA
Reverend and Mrs. Scott M. Pearson, Taft CA
Mrs. Dorothy Regan curley, Lancaster CA
Mr. Carl E. Serkland, Livermore CA
Pastor Ralph Hiatt, Modesto CA
Pastor William Eckmann, Kaneohe HI
Mrs. Lois Salapka, Chewelah WA
Mrs. Annette Reino Sindona, Millwood NY
Calvary Baptist Church, Monaca PA
Moore's Mountain Church, Mechanicsburg PA



Signed by:

Mt Carmel Regular Baptist Church, Luray VA
Riverside Apostolic Church, Morgantown WV
Mr. Eric S. Woolard, Williamston NC
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Charles, Statesville NC
Dr. and Mrs. Carson Moseley, Taylorsville NC
Ridge Baptist Church, Summerville SC
Marks Baptist Church, Augusta GA
Mr. Harold Hanks, Mount Dora FL
First Baptist Church Oakland Park Florida,
Oakland Park FL
Pastor J. Harold Davis, Bowling Green FL
Capernaum Ministries Inc., Lake Wales FL
Mr. Dennis Paige, Kissimmee FL
Mrs. Teresa Green, Gadsden AL
Mrs. Deborah Smith, Alexandria AL
Auburn Fellowship, Auburn AL
Coletown Baptist Church, Copperhill TN
First Baptist Church, Morristown TN
Providence Baptist, Alamo TN
Reverend William Schroeder, Pleasant Hill MO
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Edds, Salina KS
Common Ground Community Church, Pochontas AR
Father's House Church, Greenville TX
Pastor and Mrs. Eduardo De Castro, El Paso TX
New Life Church, Colorado Springs CO
Living Hope Baptist Church, Whittier CA
Abundant Life Church, Redlands CA
Oasis of Faith Church, Oakley CA
Mr. Reed Warren, Burlington WA

Calvary Hill Church of God, Lawrenceburg TN
Leesburg Baptist Church, Morton MS
Mr. Edward Padley, Olmsted Twp OH
Carpenters House of Prayer, Hillsboro OH
FUMC, Athens OH
Fowlerville Church of the Nazarene, Fowlerville MI
Central Wesleyan Church, Holland MI
Bill Hansen, Estherville IA
Good News Fellowship Church, Stevens Point WI
Reverend and Mrs. Scott Craig, Rapid City SD
Voice of The Trinity, Chicago IL
Mr. E. T. Gee, Gibson City IL
Donnie Plemons, Rock Island IL
Silvis Heights Baptist Church, Silvis IL
Perry Presbyterian Church, Perry IL
Pastor and Mrs. James A. Wolfe, Taylorville IL
Pastor Kevin Nix, Independence MO

Pastor Dan Anderson, Wichita KS
Dr. Ronald Bartzatt, Omaha NE
Friendship Baptist Fellowship Church, Poteau OK
Mr. Russell Stewart, Montgomery TX
Pastor David Meek, Air Force Vet, Greeley CO
Mrs. Karen Wertzberger, Reno NV
Calvary Chapel of Alpine, Alpine CA
Reverend and Mrs. Rick L. Line, Menlo Park CA
Roger Metcalf, Gresham OR
McKenzie Road Baptist Church, Olympia WA