



FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE

## ACTION ALERT

NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR A HUMAN LIFE AMENDMENT, INC.  
1500 Massachusetts Avenue, NW • Suite 24 • Washington, DC 20005

202.393.0709  
FAX: 202.347.1333  
NCHLA OPD

### Protect Rights of Conscience and Religious Liberty!

The Obama Administration's contraceptive/abortifacient/sterilization mandate will begin to be enforced against nonprofit religious schools, charities and health care providers on August 1. In the days to come, Congress must decide whether to address this problem through must-pass legislation before that deadline. Members of the House should be urged to co-sponsor the Health Care Conscience Rights Act (H.R. 940), and to include it in the next bill needed to keep the federal government operating. Please act today to protect conscience rights and religious liberty!

#### Recommended Actions:

- Send e-mails through NCHLA's Grassroots Action Center at: [nchla.org/actiondisplay.asp?ID=292](http://nchla.org/actiondisplay.asp?ID=292). Note: In the e-mail Action Alert you will be able to send a separate message to House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) using his special Speaker's web form.
- Contact your Representative by phone. Call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at: 202-224-3121, or call your Representative's local office. Additional contact info can be found on Representatives' web sites at: [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov).

Suggested Message: "Please co-sponsor the Health Care Conscience Rights Act (H.R. 940), and include it in upcoming 'must-pass' legislation. Government must not force Americans to violate their religious and moral beliefs on respect for life when they provide health care or purchase health coverage."

When: Please contact your Representative today!

#### Background

The introduction of H.R. 940 was welcomed by both Archbishop William Lori, Chairman of the bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on Religious Liberty, and Cardinal Sean O'Malley, Chairman of the bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities. In a March 8 letter, Cardinal O'Malley urged Members "to support H.R. 940, and help incorporate its policy into upcoming 'must-pass' legislation." See: [nchla.org/datasource/iddocuments/OMalleyLtr030813.pdf](http://nchla.org/datasource/iddocuments/OMalleyLtr030813.pdf). In an earlier letter to Congress, Archbishop Lori explained why conscience protection provisions like those found in H.R. 940 are needed. See: [nchla.org/datasource/iddocuments/LoriLtr021513.pdf](http://nchla.org/datasource/iddocuments/LoriLtr021513.pdf). For a Fact Sheet on H.R. 940, see: [nchla.org/datasource/iddocuments/HCCRAfactsheet.pdf](http://nchla.org/datasource/iddocuments/HCCRAfactsheet.pdf).

Under the new health care law, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) requires most health plans to cover "preventive services for women," including services that many citizens find objectionable for moral and religious reasons. These objectionable services include sterilization, FDA-approved birth control (such as the IUD, Depo-Provera, 'morning-after' pills, and the abortion-inducing drug Ella), and "education and counseling" to promote these to all "women of reproductive capacity," including minor girls. The HHS mandate allows only a *very narrow* exemption for a "religious employer." On February 1, HHS released a new "proposed rule" that goes into greater detail on the "accommodation" but continues to allow only a very narrow exemption, chiefly aimed at what it calls "houses of worship." Other religious organizations offering education, health care and charitable services to all in need do not qualify for the exemption. There is no exemption or delay for individuals, or for businesses owned and operated by individuals with moral or religious objections.

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