

Abortion Pill Mandate 'Exceptions' Leave Seniors in the Cold

The Obama administration's abortion pill mandate just got hit with its first legal challenge since the announcement last week of additional proposed rules that do not respect the **religious freedom** of family business owners. The federal lawsuit was filed Monday on behalf of the owner of several small businesses that run senior living centers and skilled nursing facilities in Colorado.

The mandate forces employers, regardless of their religious or moral convictions, to provide insurance coverage for abortion-inducing drugs, sterilization, and contraception under threat of heavy penalties. The owner of the senior facilities, Stephen W. Briscoe, is an evangelical Christian who specifically objects to being forced to provide coverage for abortifacients.

"Americans should be free to honor God and live according to their consciences no matter where they are. A person's faith convictions don't disappear the moment he or she steps outside of a church building," says Alliance Defending Freedom Senior Counsel Michael J. Norton, a former U.S. attorney. "This lawsuit puts a glaring light on the fact that the Obama administration just doesn't understand what religious freedom really is. All Americans have a God-given freedom to live and do business according to their faith, and the **First Amendment** has always protected that."

Briscoe owns several separate Colorado companies that operate senior independent living residences, assisted living centers, and skilled nursing facilities along with related businesses that manage such facilities. His businesses collectively

employ more than 200 full-time employees. His lawsuit, *Briscoe v. Sebelius*, was filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado.

“The Constitution does not allow the government to involve itself in religion by mandating what faith is, who the faithful are, and when and where their faith can be lived out,” said Natalie Decker, one of nearly 2,200 allied attorneys with Alliance Defending Freedom. “Confining our faith to our homes and our churches is not the job of Washington politicians and bureaucrats.”

Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys and allied attorneys are also litigating eight other lawsuits against the mandate on behalf of Sioux Chief Manufacturing, Annex Medical, Grote Industries, Tyndale House Publishers, Grace College and Seminary and Biola University, Hercules Industries, Geneva College and The Seneca Hardwood Lumber Company, and Louisiana College. The lawsuits represent a large cross-section of Protestants and Catholics who object to the mandate.