

Baptists, Nuns, Rabbis, Lutherans, and 20 States Petition the Supreme Court to Take This Case

On Monday 20 states – along with a group of Orthodox Jewish Rabbis, five orders of nuns, the flagship seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention, and many other religious and secular organizations – have filed friend-of-the-court briefs at the Supreme Court supporting the Little Sisters of the Poor in their HHS mandate challenge. Last month, the Little Sisters and several other religious ministries appealed to the Supreme Court for relief from the government, which is forcing them to comply with the healthcare mandate in violation of their faith or pay millions in IRS fines. (You can watch a relevant video [here](#).) “We are deeply grateful for the outpouring of support we have received from such a wide range of people and groups,” said Sister Loraine Marie Maguire, Mother Provincial for the Little Sisters of the Poor. “We simply ask the government to allow us to continue our ministry of caring for the elderly poor as we have for over 175 years without being forced to violate our faith or pay government fines.” “This strong show of support for the Little Sisters demonstrates just how important it is that the Supreme Court address the impact of the HHS mandate, particularly on religious groups,” said Mark Rienzi, who is a senior counsel at the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty. “It is especially significant that 20 state governments are supporting the Little Sisters at the Supreme Court.” In addition to the 20-state *amicus* brief, briefs are being filed by, among others: the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, Dr. Albert Mohler, and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Cato Institute, several law professors, the Judicial Education

Project, the Christian Legal Society, the National Association of Evangelicals, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the Christian and Missionary Alliance Foundation, the Alliance Community for Retirement Living, Simpson University, Crown College, and the 181-member Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. Such strong support is an indication that the Court is likely to decide in the upcoming term whether religious ministries, like religious for-profit businesses, will receive protection from the HHS mandate – the ObamaCare regulation that compels employers to give female employees contraception, sterilization, and abortion-inducing drugs with no co-pay. That support also shows the broad importance of the case to a variety of different religious groups and faith traditions. In January 2014, the Supreme Court issued an emergency order protecting the Little Sisters. But in July 2015, the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals denied relief to the Little Sisters, their health benefits provider Christian Brothers, and the Baptist ministries GuideStone, Reaching Souls, and Truett-McConnell College. Last month, the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty and a legal team including former Solicitor General and leading Supreme Court advocate Paul Clement filed the cert petition on behalf of the religious groups. “The Supreme Court has already granted interim relief from the HHS mandate to religious groups five times,” Rienzi said. “The government has exempted thousands of businesses from the HHS mandate, so why is it needlessly forcing religious institutions, nuns and homeless shelters to carry out its goals? The government already has its own exchanges to do that.” The Becket Fund continues to lead the charge against the unconstitutional HHS mandate, winning a landmark victory at the U.S. Supreme Court in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*. It currently represents the Little Sisters of the Poor, Mother Angelica’s Eternal Word Television Network, and Colorado Christian University, along with many other religious ministries. Five other petitions challenging the HHS mandate have already been filed at the Supreme Court and more are expected. In addition to the Becket Fund and Paul Clement, the

Little Sisters petitioners are also represented by Locke Lord LLP and Kevin Walsh, a law professor at the University of Richmond.