

Religious Liberty Groups Praise President Trump's Rule Proposal

Wednesday, a draft of a final revised rule was leaked to the media that demonstrates President Donald Trump's continued dedication to protecting Americans' religious liberty.

The rule, which would apply to the Department of Health & Human Services and its enforcement of the so-called "contraceptive mandate" in the Affordable Care Act—also known as Obamacare—would protect the conscience of those who wish to follow their sincerely held religious beliefs. As several have pointed out, including the president himself, no one should be punished for following his or her faith.

Several religious liberty groups have applauded the draft, even though it's not yet in its final form. Among the first to do so was Family Research Council. Its president, Tony Perkins, issued the following statement after reading the leaked draft:

While this apparent leaked document is a draft, it is a very positive sign to see the federal government work to cease its hostility toward Christians and those who object to the Obama era health care mandates. This draft regulation shows that Secretary Tom Price and President Trump intend to make good on their pledge to vigorously protect and promote American's First Freedom.

As many Americans of faith have experienced, the extent of the Obama administration's hostility toward their beliefs was astounding. From President Obama's dismissal of people of faith as Americans 'clinging' to their religion, to threatening millions in crushing fines against charities like the Little Sisters of the Poor, the Obama

administration made clear they believed people of faith had no place in the public square and that religious beliefs or moral convictions were irrelevant to the health care they provide.

Respecting the freedom of Americans to follow their deeply held beliefs is a long-held American tradition and grounded firmly in the Constitution. The draft regulation would continue the process of righting this wrong and restoring Americans' full First Amendment rights. The freedom to live out faith in all areas of society without government punishment or intimidation is fundamental to making America great again."

First Liberty Institute also weighed in:

First Liberty Institute represents multiple religious ministries across the country seeking relief from Obamacare's so-called "contraceptive mandate." As a result of today's leaked interim final rule, First Liberty's clients—including retirement ministries like Shell Point Retirement Community and the Alliance Community for Retirement Living in Florida, Town and Country Manor in California, Chapel Pointe at Carlisle in Pennsylvania, and the denominational colleges of Simpson University in California and Crown College in Minnesota—look forward to having their religious liberty fully restored for the first time in well over three years.

The religious ministries first filed suit seeking relief from the Obama administration's contraceptive mandate in October of 2014 and have been waiting for resolution on appeal since the spring of 2015. Today's leaked interim final rule should end these lawsuits since the ministries would be exempt under this rule.

"The Trump administration has clearly announced its intent to adopt an important new policy for religious ministries

across the country: the government will no longer force a religious ministry to violate their faith or face a government penalty,” Jeremy Dys, Deputy General Counsel of First Liberty Institute says. “Our clients are delighted to see their religious liberty potentially restored and to be freed to pursue their mission without the threat of punishment by their government hanging over their heads.”

[Click here to read the draft final rule.](#) {eoas}