

What the Hobby Lobby Victory Really Means for Religious Liberty

The United States Supreme Court on Monday affirmed our nation's historic understanding of religious liberty by providing an exception to the abortifacient mandate that had been handed down by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of the Affordable Care Act.

The mandate requires employers to pay for drugs to which many Americans morally object. The department made no accommodation whatsoever for businesses closely-held by people of deep religious conviction, such as Conestoga Wood Specialties of Lancaster County and Hobby Lobby of Oklahoma. The confiscatory fines proposed by the administration threatened to drive those who objected to the mandate out of business ownership entirely.

Barbara Green, co-founder of Hobby Lobby:

“Our family is overjoyed by the Supreme Court’s decision. Today the nation’s highest court has re-affirmed the vital importance of religious liberty as one of our country’s founding principles. The Court’s decision is a victory, not just for our family business, but for all who seek to live out their faith. We are grateful to God and to those who have supported us on this difficult journey.”

Dr. George O. Wood, General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God and licensed to practice law before SCOTUS:

“The Court should be commended for recognizing that individuals do not surrender their religious freedom rights when they incorporate as a closely held, for profit business. A family-owned business—even a for-profit corporation such as

Hobby Lobby—has religious freedom rights because members of the family do. A ruling against Hobby Lobby would've meant that the government could require pro-life business owners to provide abortion-inducing drugs to their employees through company health plans. That unconscionable conclusion is—thankfully—avoided by today's ruling.”

Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference:

“By ruling in favor of Hobby Lobby, the Supreme Court affirmed the distinct God-given right of conscience and religious freedom, which empowers the individual to embrace life, advance liberty and pursue happiness without having to sacrifice faith or conscience on the altar of expediency. For that matter, I do believe that while this outcome validates this fundamental right, the many threats in both culture and society make religious liberty the quintessential civil rights issue of the 21st century. For people of faith, this decision requires both celebration and a renewed commitment to vigilance, as today's complacency is tomorrow's captivity.”

Jay Sekulow, Chief Counsel of the ACLJ:

“This is a landmark decision protecting religious freedom and freedom of conscience. The court clearly recognized that closely-held corporations enjoy religious liberty rights just as they enjoy rights to free speech. American citizens do not lose their religious freedom when they form a corporation and try to live out their religious values in the conduct of their business. Moreover, the court—by holding that closely-held corporations cannot be forced to directly subsidize abortion-pills—dealt a severe blow to the Obama Administration's ongoing assault on religious liberty and represents a significant setback to the abortion industry.”

U.S. Representative Randy Hultgren (IL-14):

“Freedom to follow one's conscience, faith and deeply held

moral convictions is at the heart of our country's identity, and I am pleased the Supreme Court defended Americans' fundamental liberties. Americans don't give up those freedoms when they open a family business or enter the workplace, and the federal government should not force anyone to choose between violating their deeply held moral convictions or facing burdensome fines and potential bankruptcy. As the federal government hands down more and more mandates on Americans, protecting individual liberty becomes even more crucial to ensuring a free society. A victory for the religious liberty of some is a victory for all."

Rick Santorum, former U.S. Senator and CEO of EchoLight Studios"

"The Supreme Court's ruling on Obamacare's contraception mandate is a tremendous victory for our freedom of conscience. I'm proud of the Green and Hahn families for holding true to their core convictions and standing up to Obamacare's intrusive contraception and abortion coverage mandate. The Hobby Lobby and the Conestoga Wood Specialties businesses were built on people living out the American dream, and their owners should not have to check their religious beliefs at the door. For the moment, the Court has restored a vital piece of the Constitution that President Obama, Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi attempted to deny working Americans 'the free exercise' of religion. Today is a great day for all Americans."

Brian Fisher, president and co-founder of Online for Life:

"I applaud the Supreme Court for ruling in favor of private companies and their owners to exercise their freedom of religion. No person or entity should be forced to provide baby-killing drugs to their employees. My hope and prayer is that our government will take further steps to stop the ongoing killing of unborn children. Let's return to a country that genuinely abides by its own Declaration of Independence and protects the right to live for every American human

being.”

National Association of Evangelicals President Leith Anderson:

“This is a big step toward preserving and deepening America’s religious pluralism. RFRA creates a level playing field for people from every faith, ensuring that Americans need not abandon their convictions when they open a school, charity or family business. The beauty of the American system is that it protects all Americans, not just those who adhere to the prevailing orthodoxies of the time,” Anderson said. “The wisdom of Congress in approving the Religious Freedom Restoration Act 20 years ago has also been reaffirmed.”

Attorney Charles W. Proctor, III:

“Today’s ruling will permit families like the Hahns of Conestoga Wood Specialties to continue running their businesses in accordance with their values. No one should have to choose between their faith and full participation in the life of our society. Today’s decision affirms this basic principle of a free society.”