



512 10th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20004-1401
(202) 626-8800 FAX: (202) 737-9189 Website: www.nrlc.org

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For more information: Tatiana Bergum, (202) 626-8825, mediarelations@nrlc.org

Rebuke to Obama Administration refusal to protect rights

U.S. House votes to protect health care providers from state-mandated abortion

WASHINGTON (July 13, 2016) – The president of National Right to Life today commended Republican leaders of the U.S. House of Representatives for winning passage of a bill to protect health care providers from the growing threat of state-government attempts to coerce participation in abortion.

The House passed the *Conscience Protection Act* (S. 304, containing text identical to H.R. 4828) on a near party-line vote of 245-182.

"State agencies in California and New York are mandating insurance coverage of abortion, and the Obama Administration recently made it clear that it will not enforce federal laws that prohibit such mandates," said Carol Tobias, president of National Right to Life. **"The Conscience Protection Act will allow direct access to the federal courts for the victims of coercive pro-abortion government policies."**

In 2014, the California Department of Managed Care issued a decree mandating that nearly all health plans in the state must cover all abortions. This directive was in blatant violation of the Weldon Amendment, a provision of the HHS appropriations bill that has been in continuous effect since 2004. Yet, after two years of inaction, on June 21 the Office of Civil Rights of the Department of Health and Human Services issued letters finding no violation. "The Obama Administration -- which grows more brazenly lawless by the week – engaged in contorted analysis and outright fabrication, in order to avoid enforcing a law that is at odds with the Administration's pro-abortion ideology," Tobias commented.

Unfortunately, the 2014 California directive is part of a broader trend. An agency of the state of New York has already adopted an abortion mandate, similar to the California policy, requiring small group employers to cover all kinds of abortion. In Washington state, a state court last month ruled that public hospitals must provide abortions if they offer maternity care.

On July 11, National Right to Life, the federation of state right-to-life organizations, [sent a letter to U.S. House members](#) expressing strong support for the Conscience Protection Act and advising House members that the House roll call on the bill will appear in the National Right to Life scorecard of key right-to-life votes of the 114th Congress.

The White House issued a veto threat on the bill, which it said, "would have the consequence of limiting women's health care choices."