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A Letter to Catholics Statewide:

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently ruled that Catholic institutions must provide health insurance that offers sterilizations, abortion inducing drugs, and contraceptives. This is a direct attack on the religious liberty of Catholic institutions which serve ALL people, not just Catholics.

As we have read, on Friday, February 10th President Obama offered some changes to the original HHS ruling. Instead of Catholic institutions having to provide the objectionable coverage the insurance companies would do it. There are three major problems with that supposed compromise. First, Catholic institutions would still have to pay for this objectionable coverage. Second, in many cases Catholic dioceses are self insured. Third, individuals would be forced to pay premiums for this coverage.

So nothing has been fixed by the President's recent action.

If the Administration will not rescind this violation of the First Amendment, then Congress should.

Please send a message to respectfully request your U.S. Senators and Congressman to co-sponsor the Respect for Rights of Conscience Act (H.R. 1179, S. 1467) that has been introduced by Representative Fortenberry and Senator Blunt. This measure ensures that the rights of conscience of Catholic institutions will be respected.

You can do this by following the link to *VoterVoice* on the homepage of our website at www.laccb.org.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Gregory M. Aymond
Archbishop of New Orleans

Most Rev. Ronald P. Herzog
Bishop of Alexandria

Most Rev. Robert W. Muench
Bishop of Baton Rouge

Most Rev. Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

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