

PRESS RELEASE:

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Christ Medicus Foundation calls for passage of Conscience Protection Act to protect religious freedom in health care

Across the country, religious freedom in health care remains under attack. Despite positive results from U.S. Supreme Court decisions in the *Hobby Lobby* case and the *Little Sisters the Poor* case, recent government pronouncements, regulatory determinations, and judicial decisions continue to undermine the freedom of medical practitioners, hospitals, and other health care entities to provide medical care consistent with their conscience.

“Today, we call on Catholics and all Americans to pray for religious freedom and contact their member of Congress urging them to vote in favor of the Conscience Protection Act of 2016. The Conscience Protection Act is legislation that will provide additional and needed protections for religious freedom in health care,” said Louis Brown, Esq., Director of CMF CURO. “Every doctor, nurse and health care entity has the right to live by his or her own conscience. No local, state, or federal government should have the authority to force anyone to participate in or provide health insurance coverage for an abortion,” Brown said.

This week the U.S. House of Representatives is expected to hold a floor vote on the Conscience Protection Act. Specifically, the legislation prohibits federal, state and local governments from discriminating against medical practitioners, health care professionals, and health care entities for refusing to perform, refer for, pay for, provide abortion coverage of, or otherwise participate in abortions. The legislation also provides a private right of action for victims of such discrimination to seek justice in court.

The urgent need for the passage of the Conscience Protection Act was reaffirmed just weeks ago on June 21st when the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a letter interpreting and finding that the federal Weldon Amendment was not violated by the state of California’s abortion mandate. The Weldon Amendment is a federal law passed as a part of federal appropriations that prohibit health care professionals and entities from being discriminated against for refusing to provide, pay for, provide insurance coverage of, or refer for abortions. Despite the Weldon Amendment, California’s mandate requires private health insurance plans in California to provide abortion coverage. The mandate even requires religious employers to provide abortion coverage in their health insurance plans.

“This latest disregard of the right of conscience and religious freedom in California is contrary to the intent of the federal Weldon Amendment. California’s abortion mandate and the federal government’s finding on it violate the principle of religious freedom upon which this nation was founded. This is just the latest example of the challenges to religious freedom in health care. The Conscience Protection Act is needed to provide additional protection for religious freedom in health care” said Mike O’Dea, Executive Director of the Christ Medicus Foundation (CMF).

“The Christ Medicus Foundation has been a leading advocate for the protection of religious freedom and the individual right of conscience in health care for many years. Congress should act now to protect the fundamental right of religious freedom in the healing profession of health care,” said Brown.

CHRIST MEDICUS

The Christ Medicus Foundation is a Catholic 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to advancing the Gospel of Life in health care. CMF has a threefold mission to protect religious freedom in health care, advance Christ-centered medical care, and provide health care options in the marketplace that advance the culture of life.

CMF CURO is the first of its kind Catholic health sharing option in the nation. It is a health care ministry that empowers Catholics to affordably provide for their medical needs and protect their religious freedom. CMF CURO is a member-representative to Samaritan Ministries International (“Samaritan” or “SMI”). Rather than paying a monthly insurance premium, CMF CURO members share medical costs by making monthly share payments directly to other members in need. CURO, in Latin, means to care for, cure, heal, and watch over, and embodies the spirit of Christ-centered health care. Visit CMF CURO (www.cmfcuro.com).

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