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The National Pro-Life Religious Council

The National Pro-Life Religious Council (NPRC) is a Christian coalition which acknowledges Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and works to encourage every Christian denomination to affirm and witness to the biblical standard of the value, dignity and sanctity of human life, and to foster ministry to those vulnerable to the violence of abortion or euthanasia.

Anglicans for Life

Conservative Congregational Christian Conference (CCCC)

Ernest Ohlhoff, Director of Religious Outreach, National Right to Life Committee

Family Research Council (FRC)

International Communion of the Charismatic Episcopal Church (CEC for Life)

Lutherans for Life (LFL)

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS)

National Clergy Council

National Institute of Family and Life Advocates (NIFLA)

Presbyterians Pro-Life (PPL)

Priests for Life (PFL)

Taskforce of United Methodists on Abortion and Sexuality (TUMAS)/Lifewatch

United Friends for Life (UFL)

NRLC President Testifies Against Senate's Unrestricted Abortion Bill



NRLC President Carol Tobias testifies before Senate Committee

WASHINGTON – Four months before the mid-term congressional election, Senate Democrats are pushing into the national spotlight “the most radical pro-abortion bill ever considered by Congress,” said Carol Tobias, president of the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC), the federation of state right-to-life organizations. Tobias was one of two non-congressional witnesses who testified against the so-called “Women’s Health Protection Act” (S. 1696), at a hearing before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee on July 15. Tobias went on to speak against this radical abortion bill on the Christian Broadcast Network as well as Eternal Word Television Network radio and EWTN Nightly News.

“This bill is really about just one thing: it seeks to strip away from elected lawmakers the ability to provide even the most minimal protections for unborn children, at any stage of their pre-natal development,” Tobias told the committee. “Calling the bill the ‘Abortion Without Limits Until Birth Act’ would be more in line with truth-in-advertising standards.”

The bill has been heavily promoted by pro-abortion activist groups since its introduction last November, although it has been largely ignored by the mainstream news media. The measure has 35 Senate cosponsors, all Democrats, including nine of the ten Democrats on the Judiciary Committee, including its chief sponsor, Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.).

The bill would invalidate nearly all existing state limitations on abortion, and prohibit states from adopting new limitations in the future, including various types of laws specifically upheld as constitutionally permissible by the U.S. Supreme Court. Among the laws that the bill would nullify are requirements to provide women seeking abortion with specific information on their unborn child and on alternatives to abortion, laws providing reflection periods (waiting periods), laws allowing medical professionals to opt out of providing abortions, laws limiting the performance of abortions to licensed physicians, bans on elective abortion after 20 weeks, meaningful limits on abortion after viability, and bans on the use of abortion as a method of sex selection. These laws generally have broad public support in the states in which they are enacted, including support from substantial majorities of women. ... Continued on Page 4

Hobby Lobby Case Arrives at the Supreme Court

After more than two years of fighting the oppressive HHS Mandate, a June 30 Supreme Court ruling defended the religious liberty of Hobby Lobby and other ‘closely held’ businesses in a 5-4 decision. Yet, even as the Court recognized that the HHS Mandate placed a substantial and unnecessary burden on for-profit businesses, the narrow ruling failed to rectify the fundamental problems of Obamacare.

The Supreme Court’s ruling upheld the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) of

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Photo Credit: HobbyLobby.com

Hundreds Brave Storm and Sub-Zero Weather to Attend National Memorial Prayer Service on January 22nd

Undeterred by a massive winter storm with wind chill temperatures below minus ten degrees, more than 800 brave souls from all over the nation joined in scripture, prayer and song before beginning the annual March for Life in Washington, DC on January 22, 2014. Bus loads of marcher came from as far away as Louisiana, North Dakota, Ohio, Missouri, New York, and Massachusetts.

The annual Memorial for the Pre-Born and Their Mothers and Fathers was held each year prior to the March for Life at famous Constitution Hall.



Make Your March for Life Plans for Jan. 22, 2015 Now!

Begin your March for Life by joining pro-life Christians from across the nation by attending the National Memorial For The Pre-born and Their Mothers and Fathers. Join us for Pro-life Christians with Scripture, Prayer, Song and an Inspirational Sermon.

For more information please go to: www.nationalprayerservice.com

NPRC Presents Workshops at NRLC Convention

Members of the National Pro-Life Religious Council presented two workshops at the National Right to Life convention in Louisville, Kentucky.

The two workshops, **Providing Support and Leadership in Churches** and **Overcoming Apathy and Pro-Abortion Opposition in all Denominations** enthusiastically received by standing room only attendees.

NPRC is dedicated to providing support for groups and individuals working to make all denominations embrace a strong pro-life position.



Associate Membership Application

Yes, I would like to become an Associate Member of the National Pro-Life Religious Council, Inc.

Enclosed is my fee of \$25.00 for membership as:
 an individual a church a group

I would like to make a tax deductible donation of \$_____ to help NPRC with its important work.

Mail to: NPRC c/o Development Office,
 PO Box 61838, Staten Island, NY 10306-9811

Contact Person _____
 Church or Group _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Denomination _____
 Phone (h) _____ (w) _____
 E-mail _____

... Hobby Lobby Continued (from page 1)

1993. This statute requires federal laws to accommodate individuals' religious beliefs unless there is a compelling interest at stake that cannot be attained through less restrictive means.

By exempting only closely held businesses from the Mandate, the Court issued a very narrow decision. According to the IRS, 'closely held' businesses are those which have more than 50% of their stock owned by "five or fewer individuals." Hobby Lobby and other privately owned businesses which are not governed by a large board of trustees fit this description. However, Fortune 500 companies could not generally be considered 'closely held' and are not exempt from the Mandate.

The Court's decision is consequential because it reinforces that a religiously-formed conscience does not need to be silenced once a person leaves the confines of four church walls. Rather, the First Amendment intended religion to have a role in the affairs of everyday life and commerce. Beliefs on Sunday must not be separated from business on Monday. Any such state-imposed separation violates the very intent of the Founding Fathers.

At the same time, significant problems remain in the wake of the Court's decision. The worst problem is that the Court left open the possibility that conscientious objections might be satisfactorily resolved by a revised mandate ("accommodation"). In this case, the employers' insurance carriers pay directly for the same drugs and devices objected to by Hobby Lobby. This

leaves unresolved the status of many entities (including religious schools, charities, and hospitals) with sincere religiously based objections to providing specific drugs and devices, who regard a federal mandate that requires them to take action to require their insurance carrier to carry out the same ends as differing only in form and not in substance from the original mandate.

Moreover, regardless of how the scope of any new mandate is defined, it is difficult to discern what would prevent HHS from issuing a further expansion of "preventive services." This could be expanded to require that most employers provide coverage for surgical abortions or RU 486.



Awaiting the Hobby Lobby Decision

The Court's ruling in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* comes nowhere near to correcting the heart of the problem, which is the overly expansive authority that the Obamacare law itself provides to HHS to define "preventive services." Only comprehensive legislative reform can cure the multiple abortion-expanding components of Obamacare – and such reform can only be accomplished with new leadership in the U.S. Senate and in the White House.

Injunction Protects Non-Profits from HHS Mandate, for Now

Following the Supreme Court's ruling on *Hobby Lobby v. Burwell*, several other plaintiffs, including the Eternal Word Television Network and the Archdiocese of St. Louis, have received injunctions from lower courts so that they do not yet need to comply with the HHS Mandate.

There are currently 51 legal cases of religious non-profit organizations objecting to the HHS Mandate, which are all in various stages of the legal process. The furthest along, and the expected to be first to get a ruling in the nation's second highest court (DC Circuit Court of Appeals) is *Priests for Life*, a group member of NPRC.

The Supreme Court's majority opinion, written by Justice Samuel Alito, argues that the HHS Mandate is illegal because it places a substantial burden upon *Hobby Lobby* by requiring it to pay excessive fines for not complying. However, Alito proposes that the Mandate could be rewritten to mirror the "accommodation"

granted to religious non-profit organizations.

According to this "accommodation" a group like *Little Sisters of the Poor* could sign a form saying that they would not pay directly for drugs and devices which they consider immoral. However, the lawyers of the *Little Sisters* argued in court that they cannot sign "the form because they cannot deputize a third party to sin on their behalf." Just because the *Little Sisters* do not pay for the drugs directly does not make it moral for someone else to pay for these same drugs. The *Sisters* argue that neither they nor their insurance company can be compelled to provide drugs or devices to which they conscientiously object.

Although it is unclear how the Supreme Court will rule on how the HHS Mandate should be applied to religious non-profit organizations, there are glimmers of hope that these 51 cases will favor religious liberty until more permanent legislation fundamentally changes Obamacare. One of the federal court judges who issued an injunction on behalf of *EWTN* wrote a strong defense of religious liberty, saying that role of the government is not to determine the rightness or wrongness of a religious belief. Rather, the court must determine whether the conscientious objection of these non-profits "reflects an honest conviction, and there is no dispute that it does."

Freed Sudanese Prisoner Meriam Ibrahim Meets Pope Francis

In a sign of solidarity for all Christians persecuted for their faith, Pope Francis met with Meriam Ibrahim after her release from a Sudanese prison. Meriam was arrested and charged with apostasy in May, but was recently released from custody following international outrage at the incident. Pope Francis praised Meriam's "courageous testament of faith."

Meriam met the Pontiff alongside her American husband, her son, who was in prison with her, and her daughter, Maya, who was born while Meriam was imprisoned. Meriam was recently released, but had to stay in the American Embassy in Khartoum while she awaited safe passage to the United States.



Meriam's husband with their newborn

Despite being pregnant, Meriam was arrested and sentenced to death by the Sudanese government for professing Christianity and marrying a Christian man. As she awaited her death in a dirty Khartoum cell, Meriam gave birth to a baby girl, Maya. Her request to give birth in a hospital was denied and Meriam was forced to remain in shackles as Maya was born. Maya has serious physical disabilities, which were most likely caused by the horrible circumstances of the birth.

Meriam's American, Christian husband insists that Meriam was never a Muslim because her Muslim father left the family when she was young. Meriam was raised by her Christian mother. However, the Sudanese

government considers Meriam a Muslim and prohibits conversion to Christianity. The government arrested Meriam and her 20-month-old on February 17 because it



Meriam Ibrahim and baby Maya Meet Pope Francis

believed that she had violated this statute. Meriam was sentenced to 100 lashes and hanging for refusing to recant her Christian faith.

International outrage surged as news of Meriam's plight spread outside of Sudan. The Archdiocese of Khartoum also urged the Sudanese judiciary to reconsider her sentence, calling it "stunning." Only after a 380,000 person petition for action did Secretary of State John Kerry urge the repeal of Sudanese law which forbids Muslims to convert.

After 129 days in prison, the Sudanese government finally released Meriam on June 23. However, Ibrahim and her family, including baby Maya, were rearrested the next day when they tried to fly out of the Sudan. Finally, they were moved to the American Embassy until they were finally granted safe passage to the U.S.

During his meeting with the newly reunited family, Pope Francis presented Meriam with rosary beads. After their stay in Rome, they returned to the United States.

... NRLC President Testifies Against Abortion Bill (from page 1)

Senate Bill 1696 would also invalidate most previously enacted federal limits on abortion, including federal conscience protection laws and most, if not all, limits on government funding of abortion.

"We believe that many voters will be appalled to learn that nearly two-thirds of Senate Democrats have cosponsored a bill to impose nationwide the extreme ideological doctrine that elective abortion must not be limited in any meaningful way, at any stage of pregnancy," Tobias said.

However, in her testimony Tobias also issued a surprising challenge, calling on the leadership of the Democrat-controlled committee, and the Democrat leadership of the full Senate, to allow a floor vote on the bill – but at the same time, to allow a vote on the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act (S. 1670),

sponsored by Senator Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) "In the spirit of 'pro-choice,' why not give the Senate a choice as well?" Tobias said to Blumenthal.

"We challenge you, and the leadership of the majority party, to allow the American people to see where every senator stands on both of these major abortion-related bills," Tobias said. "Let the American people see which bill reflects the values of each member of the United States Senate."

The Graham bill, which has 41 Senate cosponsors, duplicates legislation that has already passed the House of Representatives (H.R. 1797). The Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act would generally protect unborn children in the sixth month and later (20 weeks), by which point they are capable of experiencing great pain during abortions.