



THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC BIOETHICS CENTER

6399 Drexel Road, Philadelphia, PA 19151 Tel. 215-877-2660 Fax. 215-877-2688 www.ncbcenter.org

Bioethics and Public Policy Report

[Click on Endnotes for More Information]

October 2012

The National Scene: The *US Conference of Catholic Bishops* has responded to the inaccurate statement of fact concerning the *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Mandate* made during the Vice Presidential Debate. For the complete statement see: <http://www.usccb.org/news/2012/12-163.cfm>. ♦ **National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC) correction concerning non-discrimination against transgendered persons:** The *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)* has issued a directive prohibiting sex discrimination by employers and insurers in health insurance coverage to **transgendered** people under the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act*. However, insurance coverage for mutilating surgeries by employers **is not** mandated.¹

The State of Conscience/Religious Liberty: A *Missouri* District Court dismissed in its entirety the lawsuit by O'Brien Industries against the *HHS contraceptive mandate*, stating that the mandate does not constitute a substantial burden on religious freedom.² ♦ The *Archdiocese of Miami*³ and two Baptist universities in Texas have filed lawsuits against the *HHS* indicating that the federal contraceptive coverage **Mandate** infringes on their religious beliefs.⁴ ♦ Also see: **Recent Good News**.

The State of Marriage: A panel of the Second US Circuit Court of Appeals voted 2 to 1 on a ruling that the federal Defense of Marriage Act (**DOMA**) is unconstitutional.⁵

State by State: The *New Jersey* Legislature is considering a proposal to legalize **assisted suicide**.⁶ ♦ *Montana* voters will have an opportunity this November to vote on whether parents should have the right to **parental notification** when their minor child is seeking an abortion.⁷

Recent Good News: The 4th District Illinois Court of Appeals has upheld a pharmacist's right to refuse to dispense **Emergency Contraception**. The NCBC was a party to an **Amicus Brief** in support of the pharmacists.⁸ ♦ In *Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest v. State of Alaska*, the Superior Court of *Alaska* ruled that the Alaskan **parental notification** law, which requires parental notification before an abortion is performed on a minor, does not violate the state's constitution.⁹

Sharing Your Good News and Your Efforts: If there are public policy advocacy strategies which you wish to share with others please e-mail mhilliard@ncbcenter.org.

Sharing of Resources: The web page of the National Catholic Bioethics Center is a significant resource in the realm of bioethics: www.ncbcenter.org. Also, bioethicists are on call twenty-four hours a day, every day of the week, for consultation by calling 215-877-2660.

¹ http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/civilrights/resources/laws/section1557_questions_answers.html.

² <http://www.lifenews.com/2012/10/01/judge-dismisses-suit-hhs-mandate-no-threat-to-religious-freedom/>.

-
- ³ http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2012-10-19/news/fl-archdiocese-healthcare-lawsuit-20121019_1_affordable-care-act-miami-archdiocese-religious-freedom.
- ⁴ http://www.nationalpartnership.org/site/News2?news_iv_ctrl=-1&abbr=daily2_&page=NewsArticle&id=36141.
- ⁵ <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Justice/2012/1018/Gay-marriage-to-Supreme-Court-More-likely-after-latest-rejection-of-DOMA>.
- ⁶ <http://www.foxnews.com/health/2012/09/27/nj-could-become-3rd-state-to-legalize-right-to-die/>.
- ⁷ http://www.flatheadnewsgroup.com/hungryhorsenews/article_0de5474a-07e5-11e2-98e1-001a4bcf887a.html.
- ⁸ <http://www.opposingviews.com/i/society/pharmacists-can-deny-access-contraception>.
- ⁹ <http://www.lifenews.com/2012/10/09/alaska-parental-notice-upheld-minors-protected-after-15-year-fight/>.