



June 9, 2009

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger,

We write to you today as a constituency that is concerned for the health and well-being of all Californians, from infants and children to their parents and grandparents. We are doctors, nurses, and medical students. We serve Californians across the state as their primary care physicians, specialists and surgeons.

We write to you to ask you to please join us in urging President Barack Obama not to rescind the conscience clause, a rule specifically allowing any doctor or nurse or medical student to freely follow their moral values and consciences, especially in matters of grave concern like abortion, in their places of work without being discriminated against or having their jobs taken.

This is a matter of grave concern for the state and the patients we serve. Each year, one in six patients in the US is cared for in Catholic hospital and 5.5 million patients each year are admitted to Catholic hospitals. According to a recent survey, 95% of faith-based physicians said they would quit their practices rather than be forced to perform a medical procedure that violated their consciences. These are the same professionals to work in the faith-based medical centers across the state and, on a volunteer basis, give their time and professional talent to communities most underserved. They would be forced to abandon their practices and shut their doors should President Obama rescind the conscience clause.

Many of the patients visiting faith-based hospitals, clinics and practices are uninsured or have Medicaid. Given the current crisis, in which millions of adults and children are losing coverage, California cannot afford to allow the Federal government to rescind the conscience clause. If it is rescinded, a healthcare crisis of greatest proportions could arise. Not only would millions more Californians be uninsured but they would have far fewer places to go to obtain care.

In light of this scenario and on behalf of all the doctors who took the Hippocratic Oath to do no harm to their patients, we ask you to please join us in asking President Obama not to rescind the conscience protection rule.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Halbig, Director
Freedom2Care

Enclosure: Relevant statistics memorandum