



June 9, 2009

President Barack Obama
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As you well know, the United States was built on the principles of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Our founding fathers came to this country to escape persecution and to be able to live in freedom from tyranny and oppression. The pilgrims came here most especially in search of religious freedom and the rights to practice their faith without interference from the government.

We are comprised of 45 organizations representing more than 5 million constituents including patients and their healthcare professionals, who would be put at a crossroads in their careers should the conscience rule be rescinded. Our organization represents doctors, nurses, physician assistants, anesthesiologists and pharmacists, who care deeply about the welfare of our patients but we would be forced to choose between our profession and honoring our conscience if we do not have sufficient protection under the law.

As doctors, nurses, and healthcare professionals, we too desire those same freedoms. Mr. President, in March of this year, you put in place the necessary rules and regulations to start the official process to rescind the conscience protection rule administered by the Department of Health & Human Services. The conscience rule specifically allows any medical professional, such as doctors or nurses, and medical students to freely follow our consciences in our places of work, especially in matters of grave concern like abortion, without being discriminated against or having our jobs taken from us.

The conscience protection rule is extremely important not only to us, but to the patients we serve. Many of us are doctors who are personally opposed to taking the life of an unborn child in-utero and if the conscience rule is rescinded and if we are forced to choose between participating in an abortion or losing our jobs, we will choose the latter. In fact, in a recent survey of faith-based healthcare professionals, 95% said they would leave their profession if forced to violate their consciences.

As a nation, two-thirds of Americans, Democrats, Republicans and Independents, support the conscience protection regulation and over half support the Hyde-Weldon Amendment (<http://www.freedom2care.org/learn/page/surveys>).

Nationally, Catholic hospitals make up about 20% of all hospitals in 21 states and the District of Columbia and admit 5.5 million people a year. Each year, every 1 in 6 patients is cared for in a Catholic hospital. Where will those patients go for care if we are forced from our practices? We



also serve many patients with Medicaid and without health insurance. Where will they go for treatment if laws are in place that force us to vacate our offices?

We respectfully and sincerely request that you do not rescind the conscience clause. It is a needed law. So many healthcare professionals have been discriminated against for adhering to their moral values. It is necessary that these doctors are protected on a national level.

These freedoms are fundamental to our country's foundation and laws. Please keep them in place.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Halbig
Director, Freedom2Care