



## Christian Voices for Life

### Weekly Pro-Life

### Education

### Prayer

### Action

---

## Conscience Protection and Religious Freedom

---



**Education:** The first amendment to the Constitution of the United States states: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or **prohibiting the free exercise thereof...**” In 1965, Pope Paul VI recommended several principles for governments to consider in formalizing freedom of religion, including that an individual should not be forced to act contrary to his conscience, nor to be restrained from acting in accordance with his conscience. (1) However, there are several ways that religious freedom is being compromised in our nation today.

First, individual healthcare providers are pressured to participate in abortion. Threatened with the loss of her job and even her medical license, nurse Cathy DeCarlo was forced to be present during a late-term abortion and verify that all fetal body parts were removed from the uterus. While conscience protection is the law in theory, it is not being enforced, and individuals do not have the right to initiate a lawsuit to protect themselves.(2) See a short (1.33 min) video with her story at [Stand with Cathy for Conscience Rights](#)

Second, the HHS mandate requires both religious institutions and private businesses to cooperate in the provision of birth control, sterilization, and abortifacient drugs.(3)

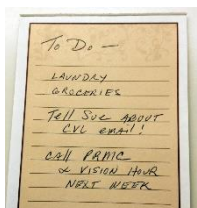
Third, both religious institutions and private businesses have been penalized for refusing to recognize same-sex “marriages” as something to be celebrated.(4)

In addition, Catholic institutions have been forbidden to provide spiritual or humanitarian services to illegal immigrants, banned from ministering to foster children because they refuse to place children with same sex couples, and discriminated against for government contracts to help victims of sex trafficking because they do not provide or refer for abortion.(3)

1. [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decl\\_19651207\\_dignitatis-humanae\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html)
2. Grenchik, Tom, “Forcing Abortion”, 5/27/16, <http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/life-issues-forum/forcing-abortion.cfm>
3. “Current Threats to Religious Freedom”, USCCB Fact Sheet, 2016, <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/upload/Current-Threats-to-Religious-Freedom-2016.pdf>
4. “Religious Liberty and Marriage” FAQ, <http://www.marriageuniqueforareason.org/religious-liberty-faq/>



**Prayer:** Dear Father God, please touch the hearts of the leaders of our nation, in the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government, to preserve the freedom of religion – and therefore freedom to follow our consciences - that our country was founded on. Allow all Americans to be reassured of our essential freedom to seek You and follow You. Please protect Christians from coercion to participate in what they believe to be wrong. Please let all branches of our government make decisions that strengthen rather than attack our freedom to follow our consciences.



**Action:** No one should be allowed to force Americans to violate their religious and moral beliefs on respect for life when they provide health care. Please ask your representatives to support the Conscience Protection Act of 2016 (H.R. 4828/S. 2927). There has been no action on the bill since March, when it was referred to the Health Committee. Go to <http://nchla.org/actiondisplay.asp?ID=292> to easily send a message to your representatives.