



FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE

# ACTION ALERT

NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR A HUMAN LIFE AMENDMENT, INC.  
1500 Massachusetts Avenue, NW • Suite 24 • Washington, DC 20005

202.393.0703  
FAX: 202.347.1383  
NCHLA.ORG

## Protect Rights of Conscience and Religious Liberty

Now is the time to urge Congress to protect our rights of conscience and religious liberty. Please urge your elected representatives to support the Health Care Conscience Rights Act, introduced in February by Rep. Diane Black (HR 940) and in August by Senator James Lankford (S. 1919). Ask them to include this bill's policy in must-pass legislation this year. Please take action today through the link below.

The need for legislation protecting the rights of conscience and religious liberty has grown more pressing. The Obama Administration's contraceptive/abortifacient mandate under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) began to be enforced against religious nonprofit schools, charities and health care providers on January 1, 2014. More recently the state of California started forcing all health insurers in the state to include elective abortions in the health plans they sell. These two problems are addressed by the Health Care Conscience Rights Act (S.1919/H.R. 940). It would add a long-overdue conscience clause to the ACA, and strengthen the Weldon amendment that forbids governmental bodies which receive federal Health and Human Services funds from discriminating against those who decline to take part in abortion or abortion coverage. With these modifications to current law, the promise of the Founders, that Americans would not be forced by their government to violate their deepest convictions of conscience, will at last be fulfilled in the modern health care system.

### Recommended Actions to take immediately:

- Send emails through NCHLA's Human Life Action Center at: [nchla.org/actiondisplay.asp?ID=292](http://nchla.org/actiondisplay.asp?ID=292)
- Contact your member by phone. Call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121, or call their local offices. Members' mailing addresses may be found at [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) and [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)
- Follow us on Twitter @nchla and retweet our posts. Repost this alert to Facebook or other social media platforms.

### Suggested Message:

"Please co-sponsor and support the Health Care Conscience Rights Act, (S. 1919/H.R. 940) and help ensure that its policy is enacted as part of must-pass legislation such as an appropriations bill. Government must not force Americans to violate their religious and moral beliefs about respect for life when they provide health services or provide or purchase health coverage."

### Background

The contraceptive/abortifacient mandate: Under the ACA, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services requires most health plans to cover "preventive services for women," including drugs and procedures that many citizens find objectionable for moral and religious reasons. These objectionable items include sterilization, FDA-approved birth control (such as the IUD, Depo-Provera, "morning-after" pills, and the abortion-inducing drug Ella), and "education and counseling" to promote these to all "women of reproductive capacity," including minor girls. Religious organizations offering education, health care and charitable services do not qualify for the rule's very narrow exemption for a "religious employer."

Abortion coverage mandate: On August 22, 2014, the California Department of Managed Health Care ordered all health plans under its jurisdiction, including those provided by churches and other religious institutions to their employees, to provide coverage for all abortions. Similar proposals have emerged in other states. In theory, current federal law forbids such discrimination, but the law has deficiencies that could allow California to evade the law or challenge it in court—and it does not allow the victims of discrimination to go to court to defend their own rights.

On September 8, 2015, Cardinal O'Malley and Archbishop Lori of the U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops wrote to the Senate urging support for S. 1919. On February 13, 2015 they urged House members to support and co-sponsor H.R. 940. For these letters and other information, see: [www.usccb.org/conscience](http://www.usccb.org/conscience)