



Concerned Citizen California Action Alert

A publication of Concerned Women for America of California

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Obama Plans to Rescind Conscience Protections

Americans have the freedom to do what is right. But if President Obama has his way, doctors and health care providers will lose that right. If they are first, who will be next?

We have until April 9 to register our opinions - and provide a permanent record - to protect the freedom of conscience for medical professionals.

Federal laws protect the right of health care providers not to participate in abortions or other procedures they believe are immoral, but those laws have been ignored.

Doctors, pharmacists and other health care providers have been discriminated against if they decline to participate in morally objectionable practices like abortion.

Last year the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) established regulations to enforce the laws.

But abortion advocates demand that no health care provider should be free to choose not to participate in abortions. They believe patients should not be free to choose pro-life doctors.

As one of his first acts in office, President Obama began the process to limit these freedoms by eliminating the regulations. He apparently does not believe that doctors and other health care providers should have the same rights as everyone else not to be forced to commit immoral acts. This is an indication of what he will do if he nationalizes health care.

If providers are coerced to act immorally, many will leave the profession. Others won't enter the profession. It will cause religiously affiliated hospitals and clinics to close. Many will lose access to health care - especially the poor and disadvantaged, who are served by faith-driven and ethical providers - because Obama believes abortion trumps ethics.

But there is something you can do about this. The process that Obama began requires HHS to collect comments from the public and take them into consideration before acting.



**Make your voice heard on
California bills**

Go to <http://ca.cwfa.org>

Click "Targeted Bills"

Check bills, download talking
points and sample letters

Find your California
legislators at

<http://leginfo.ca.gov/yourleg.html>

Remember, we have only until April 9 to act. Then the HHS comment period closes.

Action: Please e-mail the Department of Health and Human Services by April 9, 2009. Urge HHS not to rescind the conscience regulations implemented by President Bush. You can send a letter by [clicking here](#).

Comments may be submitted electronically on the HHS Web site at www.Regulations.gov (by entering 0991-AB49 in the search box).

Please also visit <http://www.freedom2care.org> and sign the petition. CWA and our allies will use this petition to show legislators, media and others the strong support for the freedom of conscience.



California Bills Attack Conscience Rights

PLEASE NOTE: SB 374 was gutted on April 2 and is no longer a bill relating to conscience protections.

SB 374 – Sen. Ron Calderon’s (D-Montebello) SB 374 targets physicians, surgeons, nurse practitioners and physician assistants requiring that they provide any patients seeking “treatment, consultation, or information pertaining to the person’s personal reproductive decisions” with “all available medical choices.” Failure to include information on any “choice,” such as abortion, will “constitute unprofessional conduct and grounds for suspension of the licensee’s license.” Exceptions are cumbersome, requiring these professionals to inform patients that they object on moral, ethical or religious grounds, notify patients that other choices exist and assist them in finding another health care worker who will provide them.

SB 374 also demands that all healthcare facilities offering obstetric or gynecological care prominently display a notice that all patients are entitled to disclosure of all reproductive choices with grounds for nondisclosure. No exceptions are included for facilities such as pregnancy care clinics.

The right to freely exercise one’s faith or closely held moral beliefs must not be diminished by this or any other measure. Dr. David Stevens, executive director of the Christian Medical Association warns, “We consider right of conscience to be the biggest issue we face. If we lose this one, soon there will be no Christian health care personnel debating the other ethical issues like cloning or physician-assisted suicide.”

Action: *No action needed at this time. We will research to see if the provisions of SB 374 have been added to another measure. For now, this bill is no longer a threat.*

AB 67 – Another bill threatens pharmacists, adding to the business code, “A pharmacist shall dispense prescriptions irrespective of the pharmacist’s ethical, moral, or religious objections. The liberty of conscience ... shall not be lawful grounds for a pharmacist to fail to dispense a prescription.” Failure to dispense drugs, including abortion-inducing medications, will result in license revocation. As with SB 347, this measure requires a sign to prominently display the dispensing requirements and instructions for filing a complaint.

Status: *AB 67 has been referred to the Assembly Business and Professions and Judiciary Committees. Hearings will be posted on our [Targeted Bills](#) list. Please check regularly for status and action you can take to share your opposition to AB 67 with the committee.*

School Board Supports Parents’ Rights

And now for some good news! Despite pressure by the American Civil Liberties Union and Planned Parenthood, school trustees in Vista, California, recently voted unanimously to retain a parent-friendly policy of not releasing seventh to twelfth grade students for confidential medical services without parental consent. On March 5, parents spoke strongly about their rights, and Dean Broyles of the [Western Center for Law and Policy](#) suggested the district adopt an even clearer policy than that already in effect, offering to represent the district at no charge should any suits be brought against the district. On March 12, Brad Dacus of [Pacific Justice Institute](#) joined Broyles in assuring trustees that their policy was within state law, and the stronger policy was adopted. *Does your school district allow release of students during school hours without a parent’s consent?* Check with your district office and consider asking your board to partner with parents and respect their rights to oversee and protect their children’s well-being by adopting a no release policy.



(NOTE: Referrals to Web sites not created by CWA are for informational purposes and do not necessarily imply an endorsement by CWA of the contents of those sites.)

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