



THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC BIOETHICS CENTER

6399 Drexel Road, Philadelphia, PA 19151 ▪ Tel 215-877-2660 ▪ Fax 215-877-2688 ▪ www.ncbcenter.org

Bioethics and Public Policy Report

September 2015

The *National Scene*: The NCBC's Director of Bioethics and Public Policy is on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Catholic Nurses–U.S.A. (NACN). The NACN works to foster a vibrant nursing organization for nurses who recognize their vocation as a health care ministry; it has successfully engaged in a number of public policy initiatives for the good of consumers of health care as well as their providers. See the most recent newsletter at <https://nacn-usa.org/news-events/news/newsletters/>. ♦ The U.S. House of Representatives has voted to defund *Planned Parenthood, Inc.* (H.R. 3301), due to its activities around the selling of fetal body parts from their abortions. To have your voice heard in the Senate (S. 1881) go to: <http://nchla.org/actiondisplay.asp?ID=319>.

The State of *Conscience/Religious Liberty*. In response to the 5th US Circuit Court of Appeals ordering [Wheaton College](#), a private evangelical college, and *East Texas Baptist University*, to offer emergency contraception coverage to its employees and students under the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS) Contraceptive Mandate, Wheaton has decided to drop its student health plan and at the same time is seeking recourse to the US Supreme Court. ♦ The 7th US Circuit Court of Appeals has reversed an injunction granted to the Christian-based Grace Schools and the [Diocese of Fort Wayne–South Bend](#) in Indiana from having to comply with the HHS Contraceptive Mandate. ♦ The 2nd US Circuit Court of Appeals has ordered two Catholic high schools and two Catholic health care agencies to comply with the *HHS Contraceptive Mandate*. ♦ The 6th US Circuit Court of Appeals has ruled that the [HHS Contraceptive Mandate](#) does not violate the religious freedom of the Michigan and Tennessee Catholic Charities agencies, Aquinas College, and other church-run institutions. ♦ A three-judge panel of the 10th US Circuit Court of Appeals refused to allow the full court to review their denial of religious liberty to the [Little Sisters of the Poor](#), stating that they must comply with the HHS Contraceptive Mandate; however, the decision was stayed, awaiting appeal. ♦ [Genesys](#) Regional Medical Center in Illinois is being sued by the ACLU for stating that it will not provide a *surgical sterilizations* when

completing a caesarian section delivery. ♦ A Kentucky county clerk continues to seek an accommodation, in her fight for her free exercise of religion, by asking that her name not appear on same-sex [marriage licenses](#). ♦ In North Carolina thirty-two magistrates, consistent with a state law respecting religious liberty, have refused to officiate at all [civil marriage ceremonies](#). ♦ An Oregon County Circuit Court judge is being investigated by the state judicial ethics commission after refusing to perform [same-sex marriages](#). ♦ An Alabama probate judge has asked the Alabama Supreme Court for an order allowing officials who object to issuing same-sex [marriage licenses](#) to be excused from such an activity. ♦ The religious conscience protection contained within an Alaska legislative proposal, banning discrimination based on [sexual orientation](#) and identity, is in jeopardy. ♦ An Illinois branch of *Office Depot* has apologized for initially refusing to print a [pro-life flyer](#). ♦ After Louisiana's proposed [Marriage and Conscience Act](#) failed in the Legislature, the Governor issued the "Marriage and Conscience Order" which will prevent the state from denying or revoking tax exemptions and deductions, contracts and other agreements on the basis of opposition to same-sex marriage. ♦ Also, see **Recent Good News**.

State by State: The NCBC, collaborating with the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD), is petitioning the Governor of [California](#) to veto the Physician – Assisted Suicide bill passed by the California Legislature. ♦ An [Alabama](#) federal district court judge has issued a temporary restraining order against a state regulation requiring abortionists to have hospital admitting privileges in a nearby facility, for the safety of women seeking an abortion. ♦ An [Oklahoma](#) District Court judge has ruled that a state law requiring prescribers of the RU-486 abortion regimen to abide by the US Food and Drug Administration requirements for its use, creates an undue burden on women seeking an abortion.

Recent Good News: The [CNS International Ministries, Inc.](#), [Heartland Christian College](#), [Dordt College](#), and [Cornerstone University](#) were granted favorable opinions in the ruling by the 8th US Circuit Court of Appeals that their religious liberty had been violated by the HHS Contraceptive Mandate. The NCBC and the National Association of Catholic Nurses–U.S.A. (the NCBC Director of Bioethics and Public Policy is on their Board of Directors) are signatories to the *amicus* brief that was before this court in support of Dordt College and Cornerstone University. ♦ The [March for Life](#) has been granted injunctive relief from the HHS Contraceptive Mandate by the US District Court for the District of Columbia. ♦ Arkansas, Alabama, Utah and Louisiana have defunded their state-based [Planned Parenthood](#) organizations due to the exposure of the sale of fetal body parts from abortions. ♦ The New Mexico Court of Appeals overturned a lower court order which had legalized [physician -assisted suicide](#) in that state.

Sharing Your Good News and Your Efforts: If there are public policy advocacy strategies which you wish to share with others, please e-mail mhilliard@ncbcenter.org.

Sharing of Resources: The web page of the National Catholic Bioethics Center is a significant resource in the realm of bioethics: www.ncbcenter.org. Also, bioethicists are on call twenty-four hours a day, every day of the week, for consultation by calling 215-877-2660.