

Substitute for House Resolution No. 185.

A resolution to memorialize Congress to enact the Respect for Rights of Conscience Act of 2011 and to urge the President of the United States to provide an effective and comprehensive religious conscience exemption from a requirement to cover services that are contrary to the religious beliefs and practices of certain faiths.

Whereas, Recent rules issued by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) still place religious employers in the position of violating their religious beliefs by forcing all health insurers and employers to cover specific services that could violate employers' religious freedoms. While the recent ruling exempts some religious organizations, the exemption now requires all health insurers, even those who insure religious organizations, to cover services that are contrary to the religious beliefs and practices of certain faiths; and

Whereas, Under this rule, religious leaders and organizations, including hospitals, universities, and service organizations, are mandated by federal law to comply with a regulation that violates their religious freedoms while also paying a cost, through offering certain coverage without deductibles or co-pays in their employee health insurance; and

Whereas, This over-reaching policy is an attack on religion and the First Amendment rights of individuals and organizations to operate according to their conscience. The passage of the Respect for the Rights of Conscience Act of 2011(H.R.1179/S.1467) would permit a health plan to decline coverage of specific items and services that are contrary to the religious beliefs of the sponsor, issuer, or other entity offering the plan or the purchaser or beneficiary (in the case of individual coverage) without penalty; and

Whereas, On Friday, February 12, 2012, in light of growing national opposition to the DHHS mandate, President Obama announced an "accommodation" to redirect responsibility for objectionable services from the employer to the employer's insurance carrier. The "accommodation," however, did nothing to alleviate the attack on religious freedom of all Americans as faith-based employers will still be mandated to provide objectionable services that insurers will be forced to add to health benefit plans; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we memorialize Congress to enact the Respect for Rights of Conscience Act of 2011 and to urge the President of the United States to protect Americans' religious liberty by providing an effective and comprehensive religious conscience exemption from DHHS regulations that violate religious liberties by requiring employers to directly or indirectly cover services that may be contrary to religious beliefs and practices; and be it further

Resolved, That we memorialize Congress and the President to consider, defend, and honor the Bill of Rights-guaranteed religious liberties, upon which this country was founded, in such a way that Americans not be forced to make a choice between their deeply held faith and compliance with federal law; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to Office of the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.