

On March 23, 2016, the Supreme Court will hear arguments for *Zubik v. Burwell*, seven consolidated cases brought by nonprofit religious organizations that claim that the employee contraceptive coverage benefit in the Affordable Care Act violates their religious freedom.

The petitioners in these cases, including Priests for Life, Southern Nazarene University and Little Sisters of the Poor, assert that filing a form or another declaration indicating their objection to the contraceptive coverage violates their religious freedom under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. In effect, they want a complete exemption, which means leaving their thousands of employees and students without access to critical health services entirely. It is clear that this litigation is actually about imposing one set of moral views on others, even if it disregards the will of individuals who work for and study at those institutions.

We, the undersigned members of the Coalition for Liberty & Justice, express our support for the right of all workers, students and their dependents to access contraceptive coverage under the Affordable Care Act. They have the right to make personal decisions based on their own beliefs. Religious freedom is not a weapon to carve out rights for some while imposing beliefs on others. Broad exemptions from laws—meant to protect the rights, health, dignity and equality of individuals—interfere with the exercise of personal conscience and religious liberty and harm people by preventing them from obtaining services. We reject the petitioners’ attempts to impose their ideas about religion on others, as well as their attempts to block employees’ and students’ health benefits under the Affordable Care Act. Such exemptions undermine equality, impede personal decision-making and jeopardize students’ and workers’ well-being.

The Coalition for Liberty & Justice represents a diverse cross-section of communities, including faith-based, secular and student groups and organizations, as well as those dedicated to LGBTQ rights, women’s rights, the separation of church and state, civil rights and reproductive rights and justice. We are united in our belief that public policies should both respect religious liberty and protect against the use of religious beliefs to discriminate or undermine equality. We believe that true religious liberty respects individuals, supports the common good and reflects the foundational principles of our nation.

We strongly support the rights of students, workers and their dependents to follow their consciences, moral codes and beliefs when making decisions about sexual and reproductive rights, including contraception. We oppose the petitioners’ request for an exemption that will leave many individuals bereft of both rights and health benefits. We hope the Supreme Court will reject the challenges to the accommodation of the contraceptive coverage benefit.

Signed,

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American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
American Humanist Association
Americans United for Separation of Church and State
Call To Action
Catholics for Choice
Center for Inquiry

Concerned Clergy for Choice
CORPUS
DignityUSA
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America
Ibis Reproductive Health
Institute for Science and Human Values
Interfaith Alliance
Jewish Women International
Keshet
Medical Students for Choice
MergerWatch
Methodist Federation for Social Action
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Council of Jewish Women
National LGBTQ Task Force
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Organization for Women
New Ways Ministry
Political Research Associates
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Religious Institute
Reproductive Health Access Project
Reproductive Health Technologies Project
Secular Coalition for America
Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual

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