



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on November 7, 2012

## Dallas' Famed Criswell College to File Suit Against Contraception Mandate

A small, but influential Christian college in Dallas has become the latest religious institution to file suit against President Obama's contraception mandate. The mandate requires employers to provide health insurance that offers free sterilization and contraception, including "morning after" birth control pills that can cause abortion. [Criswell College](#), founded in 1971 by [W.A. Criswell](#), the famed and fiery pastor of Dallas' First Baptist Church, declared in its suit filed November 1 that it would be "sinful and immoral for it to intentionally participate in, pay for, facilitate, or otherwise support abortion, which destroys human life." The suit goes on to state that the college holds that "the Sixth Commandment ('thou shalt not murder') proscribes payment for and facilitation of the use of drugs and devices that can and do destroy very young human beings in the womb."



Declaring Criswell's belief that "life begins at conception," the suit charges that the regulations imposed by the mandate, rolled out by the Department of Health and Human Services in August 2011, "trample on the freedom of Criswell College and millions of other American organizations and individuals to abide by their religious convictions and to comply with moral imperatives they believe are decreed by God Himself."

In a statement Criswell's president, Dr. Jerry Johnson, emphasized that the mandate "requires us to violate our religious beliefs by forcing us to fund something that is contrary to the biblical values we stand for. We feel betrayed that the government is trying to use the force of law to make us change our religious beliefs and practice by forcing us to fund the taking of innocent life."

The mandate, which was instituted as part of President Obama's infamous Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, provides exemptions for churches and other religious bodies that can meet the following criteria: the organization has as its main purpose the "inculcation of religious values"; the organization's employees are individuals "who share the religious tenets of the organization"; the organization primarily serves individuals "who share the religious tenets of the organization"; and the organization "is a church, an integrated auxiliary of a church, a convention or association of churches, or is an exclusively religious activity of a religious order, under Internal Revenue Code 6033(a)(1) and (a)(3)(A)."

In its suit, Criswell College complains, as do other religious organizations that have filed similar legal actions, that it is "not 'religious' enough under this definition in several respects, because, among other



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reasons, it has purposes other than the ‘inculcation of religious values’ and because it does not fall into the category of churches, integrated auxiliaries of particular churches, conventions or associations of a church, or the exclusively religious activities of a religious order.”

The lawsuit, which is the 39th filed against the mandate by both religious organizations and private businesses, lists a number of defendants, including HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, U.S. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis, U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, and the three departments the bureaucrats oversee.

Criswell College is being represented in the case by the Texas-based legal advocacy group [Liberty Institute](#), whose litigation director, Hiram Sasser, said: “With full knowledge that many religious organizations hold the same or similar beliefs as Criswell College, this Administration issued regulations forcing Criswell College and others to pay for and otherwise facilitate the use of abortion-inducing drugs in violation of their religious beliefs and practices.”

Criswell joins a growing list of evangelical universities to file suit against the mandate, including Houston Baptist University, East Texas Baptist University, Wheaton College (Illinois), Biola University, and Colorado Christian University. Among the many Catholic institutions that have filed complaints against the mandate are Notre Dame University (Indiana); the Catholic University of America (Washington, D.C.); Ave Maria University (Florida); the Archdioceses of Miami, New York, and St. Louis; the Diocese of Ft. Wayne-South Bend, Indiana; and Priests for Life (Staten Island, N.Y.) Additionally, a growing number of private businesses have filed suit against the mandate, citing the religious convictions of the companies’ owners. The businesses include Hobby Lobby, Hercules Industries in Colorado, and, most recently, Grote Industries in Indiana.

A complete list by state of all lawsuits filed against the contraception mandate is available [HERE](#).

*Photo: Criswell College*



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