



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on March 22, 2012

Nationwide Rally Against Contraception Mandate Slated for March 23

Christians and pro-life activists will gather March 23 in at least 140 cities around the nation to take a bold stand against the Obama Administration's contraception mandate. Eric Scheidler (left) of the Pro-Life Action League, who is organizing the Nationwide Rally for Religious Freedom, said that since his group began planning the event, the number of cities expressing interest in hosting rallies has nearly tripled.



"The buzz is incredible," Scheidler told the [Catholic News Agency](#). "I'm getting phone calls from people all over the country." He said that as the Obama Administration has refused to abandon the requirement that Christian institutions provide free birth control and sterilizations to their employees through their insurance programs, the numbers of individuals and institutions standing up to resist has exploded. "New cities and towns are still coming on to the rally every single day," he told the Catholic news site on March 20. "We went into the weekend with 110, we came out of the weekend with over 120. The number of blog posts, and stories, and chatter on Facebook is another sign."

The theme for the rally, which will be held at noon (local time) on Friday March 23, outside federal buildings, congressional offices, and historic sites across the country ([click HERE for all locations](#)) will be "Stand Up for Religious Freedom — Stop the HHS Mandate!" Religious, pro-life, pro-family, and community leaders will speak and lead participants in prayer to bring an end to the contraception mandate announced by the department of Health and Human Services in February.

Scheidler said that the rallies are part of the momentum that has built as religious and pro-life leaders have spoken out against the President's brazen attempt to trample America's constitutional freedoms. "At no point has the Obama Administration ever taken seriously the conscience concerns, the moral objections, or the religious objections of the American people to this mandate," he observed. "Until they allow all employers to opt out of providing contraceptives, sterilization, and abortion-inducing drugs — which are not 'preventive care' for anything, because pregnancy is not a disease — we will continue to fight this mandate."



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As reported by [The New American](#), shortly after its original decree the White House attempted to defuse the outrage by announcing that it would “accommodate” religious institutions by relieving them of the requirement to provide or pay for contraception coverage, shifting the responsibility instead to insurance companies, which would be directly responsible to offer women the same coverage “free of charge.” But the U.S. Catholic Bishops and other religious leaders pointed out that the compromise amounted to a “distinction without a difference,” since the religious employer would still be required to pay for the insurance coverage and so would still be footing the bill for the contraception coverage it morally opposes.

As the moral crisis has intensified, the White House has recruited women to testify to the “hardship” they would face without free access to contraceptives. Similarly, pro-abortion and feminist groups have declared that churches and religious leaders are waging a “war on women” by standing against the mandate. Scheidler said that it is “insulting to the intelligence of women ... that they continue to use this outrageous rhetoric and create these entirely fictional ‘crises.’ There’s no contraception crisis in this country.” As for the “war on women” charge,” he told the Catholic News Agency that the abortion/contraception crowd is waging war “against women’s intelligence. Anyone can see how much of the pro-life and pro-family movement is led by women.”

Fr. Terry Gensemer of the National Pro-Life Religious Council, who is organizing the rally in Birmingham, Alabama, said that at its foundation the effort is not about the issue of contraception. “This is about protecting religious liberty as it is enshrined in the United States Constitution,” he said, adding that the contraception mandate “completely disregards our freedoms as U.S. citizens and tears down the truths on which America was founded. This rally is intended to draw attention to those facts and to generate even stronger national opposition to a mandate that is already opposed by millions of Americans.”

Scheidler noted that while many of the rally organizers are Catholic, the nationwide event is meant for all who are alarmed by the attack on religious liberty in America. “This really isn’t just a Catholic issue,” he pointed out. “This is a direct attack on the constitutionally protected right of religious organizations to define their own mission and purpose, which has been attacked by the Obama Administration.”

Organizers are hoping that believers of all persuasions will attend a rally near them, and to bring their pastors or priests with them. “We’re really encouraging people to invite local religious leaders — not just Catholics, but Protestants, Jews, and others — to participate as speakers at the rallies as well,” Scheidler said.

Bryan Kemper of [Priests for Life](#), one of the groups organizing the rallies, told [LifeSiteNews.com](#) that the Obama Administration’s attack on faith and freedom in America “has woken a sleeping giant” among the nation’s faithful. “What we are seeing is a Christian unity like we have never seen before,” he noted. “What we would like to see is for the American public — not only Christian, but all of us who believe in the Constitution — to stand up and tell the Obama Administration this is not a dictatorship and we will not be okay with this in America.”

In related news, the [Catholic Sentinel](#) reported that the U.S. Catholic Bishops are urging Catholics and “all people of faith” across the nation to observe March 30 as a day of prayer and fasting for religious freedom and conscience protection. The bishops are asking believers to join them in “prayer and penance for our leaders and for the complete protection of our first freedom — religious liberty — which is not only protected in the laws and customs of our great nation, but rooted in the teachings of our great tradition.”



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