



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on September 29, 2012

## Notre Dame Invites Obama Again, This Time to Debate Romney

Notre Dame University [has invited](#) pro-abortion President Barack Obama back to campus, this time to debate GOP presidential opponent Mitt Romney, whose position on abortion hasn't always been clear.

The latest invitation to the pro-abortion president, [who believes](#) the unborn who survive "botched" abortions should be killed, comes as the university awaits word on a lawsuit [it filed](#) against Obama. That lawsuit involves the president's [mandate](#) that forces Catholic employers to provide free birth control, via insurance companies, for employees.



Notre Dame is no stranger to controversy involving the president, [who says](#) he is a Christian. When it [honored him](#) with a degree and commencement address, serious Catholics were up in arms.

### New Criticism

Inviting presidential candidates is "continuing a long-standing tradition," [a Cardinal Newman Society release said](#), noting that Notre Dame president Rev. John Jenkins and student body President Brett Rocheleau "addressed letters to each of the presidential aspirants, offering Notre Dame as a 'forum for serious political discussion' on important issues facing the nation." The release continued,

The intent of the invitations, which include the candidates' running mates, is to provide the campus community a firsthand impression of the contenders and their messages.

The tradition of election-year invitations to presidential and vice presidential candidates was established 60 years ago by [Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C.](#), in his first year as Notre Dame's president. That year, both Dwight Eisenhower and his Democratic opponent, Adlai Stevenson, spoke at the University.

### Last Controversy

That is precisely why Obama's last invitation to South Bend caused "more than 367,000 individuals [to sign] [The Cardinal Newman Society's petition](#) opposing [his] commencement address and honorary degree from Notre Dame," and why "[83 Catholic bishops](#) publicly criticized the honor," the Newman society noted in its release on the proposed Obama-Romney debate.

"In 2004, the U.S. bishops approved a policy banning Catholic honors and platforms to individuals who oppose fundamental Catholic teachings," the [society noted](#). Although wishy-washy on some points, that teaching, "Catholics in Political Life," [is clear](#) about two things. The bishops taught,

It is the teaching of the Catholic Church from the very beginning, founded on her understanding of her Lord's own witness to the sacredness of human life, that the killing of an unborn child is always



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intrinsically evil and can never be justified. If those who perform an abortion and those who cooperate willingly in the action are fully aware of the objective evil of what they do, they are guilty of grave sin and thereby separate themselves from God's grace.

To make such intrinsically evil actions legal is itself wrong. This is the point most recently highlighted in official Catholic teaching. The legal system as such can be said to cooperate in evil when it fails to protect the lives of those who have no protection except the law. In the United States of America, abortion on demand has been made a constitutional right by a decision of the Supreme Court. Failing to protect the lives of innocent and defenseless members of the human race is to sin against justice. Those who formulate law therefore have an obligation in conscience to work toward correcting morally defective laws, lest they be guilty of cooperating in evil and in sinning against the common good.

The Catholic community and Catholic institutions should not honor those who act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles. They should not be given awards, honors or platforms which would suggest support for their actions.

That is why serious Catholics were upset that the [radically pro-abortion Obama](#) received the honorary degree and the opportunity to address the university's graduates.

### **Notre Dame is Suing Obama Over Mandate**

Rather, the [Newman society notes](#),

The invitation will seem inappropriate to many Catholics, as the Church struggles with the intransigence of the Obama administration on a Health and Human Services regulation forcing Catholic institutions to provide employee and student health insurance coverage for sterilization, abortion-causing drugs, and contraceptives.

The University of Notre Dame is in the awkward position of having invited to campus the target of the [University's pending lawsuit](#) over the HHS contraceptive mandate. President Obama has supported legal abortion, funding for Planned Parenthood, homosexual "marriage" and embryonic stem cell research — all considered by Catholics to be highly immoral.

And Notre Dame's position is almost unique among most of the 43 Catholic employers [who have sued](#) the Obama administration to stop the implementation of his the unprecedented law. They recently filed briefs to stop federal courts from dismissing the lawsuits. Notre Dame, as [its lawsuit argues](#), self-insures its employees, meaning an insurance company would not buffer its provision of contraceptives, sterilization, and abortifacient drugs. The university would pay directly. [Obama says](#) that doesn't matter, that his mandate binds Catholic employers who self-insure.

Obama takes that position despite his alleged "compromise" on the mandate, which said an insurance company must provide coverage for "free" if a Catholic employer cannot pay it for reasons of conscience. Thus, say critics, the "compromise" is meaningless. When [Obama announced](#) the "compromise," the [Wall Street Journal offered](#) a basic economics lesson to explain why the "compromise" was nothing of the sort. "Insurance companies won't be making donations," the newspaper explained, using the example of Notre Dame, although the university, is, again, self-insured. It explained,

Drug makers will still charge for the pill. Doctors will still bill for reproductive treatment. The reality, as with all mandated benefits, is that these costs will be borne eventually via higher



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premiums. The balloon may be squeezed differently over time, and insurers may amortize the cost differently over time, but eventually prices will find an equilibrium. Notre Dame will still pay for birth control, even if it is nominally carried by a third-party corporation.

So Notre Dame has now invited a president who not only supports unlimited abortions for all but also wants to force the school to trespass the teachings of the Church it supposedly represents.

Monetarily, the bottom line for the university [is about \\$9 million annually](#) in fines if it refuses to bow to the ObamaCare mandate.

## **Romney on Abortion**

Mitt Romney is something of a cipher on abortion. [He declared](#) himself pro-choice in the past, but has apparently changed his view. His website does not feature an “abortion” or “pro-life” link and instead encapsulates his view on the matter under a link titled “Values.”

The first message on that web page [is this](#): “Mitt Romney is pro-life.”

Mitt believes that life begins at conception and wishes that the laws of our nation reflected that view. But while the nation remains so divided, he believes that the right next step is for the Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade* — a case of blatant judicial activism that took a decision that should be left to the people and placed it in the hands of unelected judges. With *Roe* overturned, states will be empowered through the democratic process to determine their own abortion laws and not have them dictated by judicial mandate.

Yet “the invitation to Governor Romney also could raise concerns,” the Newman society noted, because in the past the GOP candidate has supported embryonic stem-cell research.

*Photo of President Obama: AP Images*



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