



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on August 3, 2012

## Pro-Life Group Announces It Will Defy Contraception Mandate

[Priests for Life](#), a Catholic organization that has been on the front lines of the pro-life cause for the past 20 years, announced August 1 that it will not comply with the Health and Human Services (HHS) contraception mandate which went into effect on that date. The mandate, which is already the target of over a score of lawsuits filed by nearly 60 faith-based organizations, requires that all non-church employers provide their employees with health insurance that includes free access to sterilization and contraception — including abortion-inducing drugs.



In an August 1 press release the organization's director, Father Frank Pavone, said that under the HHS rules, Priests for Life was not "religious" enough to qualify for the one-year moratorium the government had given some non-church faith-based organizations to adapt their health insurance plans to the mandate. "But regardless of all that," he announced, "we do not adapt to injustice; we oppose it. Therefore today, on behalf of our organization and on behalf of myself personally, I announce our conscientious objection to this mandate."

Pavone noted that while "Priests for Life has the highest respect for civil government and advocates the observance of all just laws ... this policy is unjust, and today I reaffirm our intention to disobey it."

Earlier in the day Pavone sent a memo to the organization's employees reminding them that "as of today, as far as the government is concerned, we have to provide health insurance coverage for practices that are morally objectionable. In order to avoid the slightest semblance of scandal, or compromise of our principles, and lest any employee should imagine that we would ever consent to provide coverage for actions that destroy human life, I want to make it clear to you today that we will disobey this mandate."

Pavone emphasized to his staff that no one connected with leadership of the organization would consent to "provide, pay for, advocate, counsel, refer, or in any way tolerate or cooperate with any process, plan, exchange of money or services, or any other activity that would enable a person to engage in the use of abortion-inducing drugs, contraception, or sterilization."

He reminded his staff that the mission of Priests for Life "is precisely to eliminate abortion in every form, and we reaffirm our trust in you that you share that mission and are likewise offended by this mandate. We will therefore stand together in resisting it, and in our confidence that we will prevail, by persevering in prayer and action, in our lawsuit."

According to the rules of the mandate, Priests for Life now faces fines of \$100 per day for each employee — a penalty that would equate into thousands of dollars per month. Nonetheless, Pavone made it clear months ago, when his group filed its own lawsuit to block the mandate, that his



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organization would defy the rule regardless of any grace period the Obama administration might offer for it to adapt. “We don’t need a year, nor do we need a moment, to determine what we are going to do, or to ‘adapt’ to the rule,” Pavone said.

A ruling by a federal judge earlier this week may give Priests for Life reason for optimism in their decision to defy the Obama-imposed mandate. As reported by [The New American](#), on July 27 federal judge John L. Kane of the U.S. District Court of Colorado imposed a preliminary injunction halting the HHS mandate in the case of Hercules Industries, a Colorado company whose owners are devout Catholics, and whose business model is founded upon that faith. Kane ruled that the company would suffer “irreparable harm” if its owners were required to abide by the mandate in conflict with their religious convictions.

“The temporary injunction will allow Hercules’ lawsuit against the mandate to move forward unimpeded,” reported *The New American*. “Had Kane ruled against the company, as of November 1 it would have been required to provide its 265 employees with free contraception — including such abortion-inducing drugs as the RU-486, the so-called “morning after” pill — along with sterilization, and related counseling that would violate the religious convictions of the owners. Since Hercules is a private, for-profit business, it, like thousands of other similar small businesses, would not qualify for the mandate’s narrowly defined religious exemption that applies mainly to churches.” Had Kane ruled against Hercules, the company would have been faced with caving in to the mandate or paying nearly \$10 million in fines per year.

While the Obama administration was expected to file a motion to have the suit filed by Priests for Life dismissed, given the ruling in the Hercules case, it is expected that the suit will continue.



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