



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on November 7, 2019

Religious Liberty Sacrificed for Abortion “Rights”

With Wednesday's ruling by a federal judge in New York, a new Trump administration rule that would have allowed healthcare clinicians to refuse to provide abortions for moral or religious reasons has been struck down as "unconstitutional."

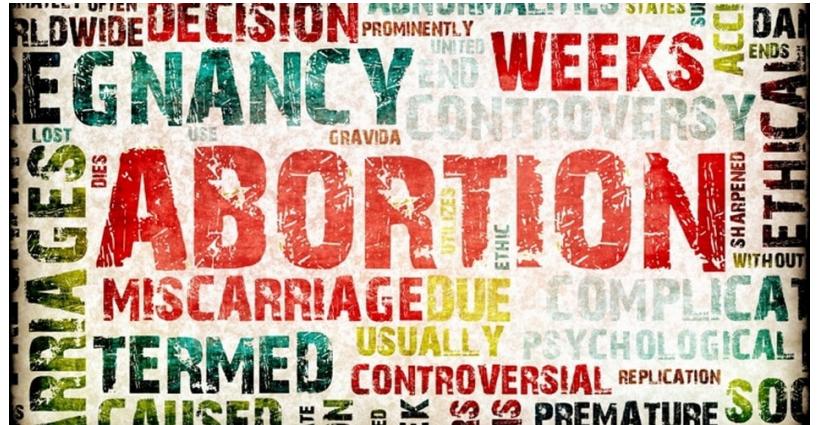
The Trump administration rule — which would have taken effect November 22 — became a rallying point for liberal groups, leading to multiple lawsuits against the Department of Health and Human Services. The rule would have allowed healthcare organizations and providers to opt out of performing abortions and other services if they objected to them on moral or religious grounds. A litany of lawsuits filed by women’s groups and health organizations as well as 19 states, the District of Columbia, and three local governments, claimed the rule would have been tantamount to a reversal of *Roe V. Wade*. Many opponents of the rule also claimed that it would have opened the door for healthcare providers to refuse basic medical care to the homosexual and “transgender” people who make up the “LGBTQ community.”

The judge's 147-page decision described the rule as "arbitrary and capricious."

Immediately after U.S. District Judge Paul A. Engelmayer of the Southern District of New York struck down the rule, Alexa Kolbi-Molinas, senior staff attorney with the Reproductive Freedom Project at the American Civil Liberties Union — one of the organizations listed at plaintiffs in the myriad lawsuits — said, “Today’s decision is an important victory against the Trump administration’s cruel and unlawful attempts to roll back critical patient protections.” She went on to say, “Everyone is entitled to their religious beliefs, but religious beliefs do not include a license to discriminate, to deny essential care, or to cause harm to others.”

Of course, no one was talking about discriminating or denying essential care. The only ones in this equation who are “causing harm to others” are the abortionists who are murdering the unborn. It requires a dark, twisted mind to see abortion as “essential care” and accuse those medical professionals who would choose not to participate in it of “causing harm to others.”

And the claims of Alexa Kolbi-Molinas notwithstanding, the fact is that the ruling of Judge Engelmayer makes it clear that not “everyone is entitled to their religious beliefs.” To force a man or woman who — because of an intact moral compass, informed by religious convictions — sees abortion as the murder to





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participate in the procedure is exactly a stripping away of religious liberty.

After all, if a person can be forced by law to lay his or her religious beliefs at the altar upon which the unborn are sacrificed to the god of convenience, can religious liberty even be said to exist?

First Liberty Institute is the largest legal group in America dedicated to protecting religious liberty. In a statement on this ruling, Stephanie Taub, senior counsel for the group, put this attack on religious liberty into perspective, saying, "This decision leaves health care professionals across America vulnerable to being forced to perform, facilitate or refer for procedures that violate their conscience. The Trump administration's HHS protections would ensure that health care professionals are free to work consistent with their religious beliefs while providing the best care to their patients."

Father Frank Pavone, national Director of Priests for Life, is cautiously optimistic that a higher court will intervene. "Once again, a judge appointed by a Democrat is standing in the way of protections for people who cannot be involved in any aspect of abortion because of deeply held religious beliefs," Father Pavone said after Judge Engelmayer issued his ruling. "Freedom of conscience is a fundamental aspect of our human dignity. It's what led our Founders to start this nation. And President Trump understands it well. It's too bad Democrats don't." Pavone continued:

Once again, the importance of having a pro-life White House and a pro-life majority in the Senate is underscored.

I look forward to this unjust ruling being adjudicated in a higher court and I urge any health-care worker who is being pressured into participating in abortion to lodge a complaint to the Office of Civil Rights.

While Engelmayer's ruling is certainly a setback and an indication of the times in which we live, it is not the final word. This decision will almost certainly be challenged and begin making its way through the labyrinth of federal courts. Given the spirit of the age, all religious Americans need to practice what is left of our religious liberty and pray to God for the right decision on this moving forward.



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