



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on September 15, 2012

Hobby Lobby to File Suit Against Obama Contraception Mandate

[Hobby Lobby](#), an Oklahoma City-based national retailer with 22,500 employees and more than 500 stores in 41 states, has become the latest — and largest — business to file suit against President Obama's contraception mandate. The mandate requires employers to provide its workers health insurance that offers free sterilization and contraception, including birth control drugs that have been found to cause abortion. Companies that refuse to follow the mandate can face fines of up to \$1.3 million per day.



David Green, Hobby Lobby's founder and CEO, is unabashedly evangelical and places his Christian faith at the center of his business, playing Christian music in Hobby Lobby stores, remaining closed on Sundays, contributing to Christian causes, and running full-page ads with the gospel message in newspapers during the Easter and Christmas holidays.

"By being required to make a choice between sacrificing our faith or paying millions of dollars in fines, we essentially must choose which poison pill to swallow," Green said as the [Becket Fund for Religious Liberty](#), which is representing the company in the case, announced the suit. "We simply cannot abandon our religious beliefs to comply with this mandate."

Thus far 28 lawsuits have been filed against the mandate, most of them involving religious universities or other faith-based organizations. Earlier this year a private business owned by Catholics [won a temporary injunction](#) to keep its owners from being forced to obey the mandate. Hobby Lobby is the first major non-Catholic business to sue to halt the mandate. Its lawsuit, filed in the District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma, charges that the mandate violates the First Amendment's freedom of religion, and asks the court to issue an injunction preventing enforcement of the mandate, similar to the one issued for the Colorado company Hercules Industries.

While Hobby Lobby's health insurance does cover preventative contraceptives, Green said that he would refuse to provide birth control drugs that can cause abortion, euphemistically called "morning after" pills and often marketed under the names Plan B and ella. "These abortion-causing drugs go against our faith," Green told reporters, according to [Baptist Press News](#).

Commenting on the suit, Becket Fund Senior Counsel Lori Windham said, "Washington politicians cannot force families to abandon their faith just to earn a living. Every American, including family business owners like the Greens, should be free to live and do business according to their religious beliefs."

Green said that it has been "by God's grace and provision" that his business has prospered and endured. "Therefore we seek to honor God by operating the company in a manner consistent with Biblical principles. The conflict for me is that our family is being forced to choose between following the laws of the country that we love or maintaining the religious beliefs that have made our business successful and have supported our family and thousands of our employees and their families."



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Another Becket Fund attorney involved with the case, Kyle Duncan, said that while Catholic organizations have often been front and center in the battle by Christians against the mandate, there are many businesses such as Hobby Lobby that are likewise threatened. "We hope that this lawsuit, on behalf of such a large and prominent evangelical Christian business, will draw attention to the fact that the government is trying to force people of all different faiths to violate their faith," he said. "This is not by any means a Catholic-only issue. Some of the drugs involved in the mandate can cause an early abortion. And many Americans who are not Catholic have a problem with this."

Green said that the issue behind the lawsuit is religious liberty. "Hobby Lobby has always been a tool for the Lord's work," Baptist Press quoted him as saying. "For me and my family, charity equals ministry, which equals the Gospel of Jesus Christ.... But now our faith is being challenged by the federal government."

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