



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 17, 2020

Trump Admin to Withhold Medicaid Funds From CA Over Insurance Abortion Mandate

The Trump administration will be withholding Medicaid funds from the state of California over its refusal to remove the mandate that requires pro-life churches and Christian groups to fund abortions in their healthcare plans.

On Tuesday, Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar announced the Trump administration will be withholding \$200 million per quarter from California until it removes the abortion-funding requirement.

Life News reports churches in California, pro-life groups, and religious organizations have been fighting the abortion mandate since 2014, when the California Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) reclassified abortion as a “basic health service” under the Affordable Care Act and required all insurance plans in the state to cover elective abortions without exemptions for churches.

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“Health care is designed to save lives and protect our health,” National Right to Life president Carol Tobias opined. “The state of California’s coercive policies have meant that nearly every health insurance plan, no matter if an individual works for a business, a church or religious school, is required to pay for an elective abortion.”

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) and Life Legal Defense Foundation filed [formal complaints](#) with the Department of Health and Human Services against the DMHC in 2014 citing federal conscience law violations. “If the state can force a church to pay for the very thing they counsel against, in violation of their constitutionally protected religious beliefs, then no American is secure,” asserted Jeremiah Galus of ADF.

“Churches should be free to serve their communities according to their religious beliefs without unjust government edicts that force them to violate those beliefs,” he continued. “California has no right to dictate what pastors or churches believe on moral and cultural issues. Yet, with the stroke of a pen — and without consulting the public — the state mandated that churches must pay for the taking of innocent human life.”

ADF has also [filed](#) several [lawsuits](#) against the DMHC. The ADF [presented](#) oral arguments before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit last month.



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“We are asking the 9th Circuit to invalidate this unconstitutional mandate because California officials are required to follow the law and legal precedent, not the dictates of groups that have an axe to grind against religious organizations that don’t share their views on abortion,” said Galus.

Through its battle against the DMHC, ADF learned the mandate was prompted by demands from Planned Parenthood to “fix” it so that the health plans of religious entities would be required to include abortion. In a series of [e-mails](#) discovered by the ADF, it was revealed that Planned Parenthood threatened to promote a legislative “solution” if the DHMC did not act otherwise, Life News reports.

Unfortunately, the Obama administration’s investigation of the mandate predictably [found](#) no violation of the law.

But the pro-life Trump administration had warned that it would be taking action if California refused to remove the mandate. “If California wants to provide abortion services, it can do so,” said Roger Severino, who directs the Office for Civil Rights in the Department of Health and Human Services. “What the state is not free to do is force people to pay for other people’s abortions.”

Severino said in January, “Just as a government shouldn’t force a kosher deli to serve ham, you shouldn’t require nuns to pay for abortion, and even more so because it involves the taking of a human life.”

The Trump administration followed through with its threat on Tuesday. “We have informed California that this policy clearly violates federal conscience laws, but the state refuses to fix the issue and comply,” Azar said, according to the *Epoch Times*. “Accordingly, we plan to withhold \$200 million in federal Medicaid funds from the state in the first quarter of 2021, and unless California amends its policies, we will seek to withhold an additional \$200 million every quarter until it complies.”

Azar also announced the Department of Justice will be filing its own separate pro-life conscience lawsuit.

Not surprisingly, California Governor Gavin Newsom took to Twitter to rally opponents by citing COVID and appealing to the Left’s hatred of all things deemed “patriarchal,” however absurd. “Nothing like the ‘pro-life’ party eliminating healthcare during a GLOBAL PANDEMIC,” the governor wrote. “California will survive without this \$\$ for now — but their frail, pathetic patriarchal system they are so desperate to protect won’t.”

But President Trump’s actions garnered support from the pro-life community. Tobias said, “We thank the Trump administration and the Department of Health and Human Services for protecting the rights of Californians who do not want to pay for or participate in healthcare plans that pay for abortions.”

The Christian Medical Association told Life News it was grateful for the actions taken by the administration. “This radical trampling of conscience is contrary to our most fundamental, Constitutional freedoms of thought, speech, and exercise of faith,” CMA Director of Federal Government Relations Jonathan Imbody said.



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