

ROBERT E. LATTA
5TH DISTRICT, OHIO

ASSISTANT MAJORITY WHIP
VICE CHAIRMAN
CONGRESSIONAL SPORTSMEN'S CAUCUS

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ENVIRONMENT AND THE ECONOMY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3505

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
1323 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
(202) 225-6405

DISTRICT OFFICES:
1045 NORTH MAIN STREET
SUITE 6
BOWLING GREEN, OH 43402
(419) 354-8700

101 CLINTON STREET
SUITE 1200
DEFIANCE, OH 43512
(419) 782-1996

11 EAST MAIN STREET
NORWALK, OH 44857
(419) 668-0206

February 10, 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20502

Dear President Obama,

I respectfully request that you rescind the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) rule that will require virtually all private health plans to include coverage for all FDA-approved prescription contraceptives, female sterilization procedures, and related patient education and counseling, as well as the proposed rule announced today that seeks to make a compromise for religiously affiliated institutions.

We can all agree that women's health is an important issue. However, the First Amendment to the Constitution guarantees freedom of religion and freedom of speech. A mandate requiring all employers to provide contraception, despite conscience objections, is an assault to religious liberty.

The rule announced today will still require a religious employer to offer a health insurance policy, to which both the employer and employee contribute money, which will pay directly for the contraceptive coverage. This policy revision still does not respect the conscience objections of religious entities nor the individuals who are employed by them.

Furthermore, neither the original religious exemption nor today's announced change protect the conscience rights of individuals who run non-religious entities. A small business owner should not be forced to comply with a mandate to which he or she has religious or moral objections. In fact, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), signed into law by President Clinton in 1993, requires the government to reasonably accommodate religious beliefs and practices that conflict with general regulation.

For over 30 years, the federal government has codified conscience rights. Along with millions of Americans, I am disappointed that this regulation departs from that tradition and the First Amendment to the Constitution. I respectfully ask that you not ignore the conscience rights of Americans and reconsider.

Sincerely,



Robert E. Latta
Member of Congress