



News Release

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MCC Joins Other Faith Groups in Rally for Religious Liberty

February 7, 2012, JEFFERSON CITY, MO – On Tuesday, March 27, St. Louis Archbishop Robert Carlson and Dr. John L. Yeats, executive director of the Missouri Baptist Convention, will join other prominent religious leaders from around the state at a Rally for Religious Liberty at the rotunda of the Missouri State Capitol building in Jefferson City.

The Missouri Catholic Conference (MCC), Missouri Baptist Convention and Missouri Right to Life are all working together to promote this rally. They will be inviting other religious organizations to participate.

This rally will protest the new mandate promulgated by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that forces employers, including the Catholic Church and other religious institutions, to provide coverage for abortion drugs, sterilization and contraceptives.

In a recent letter to parishioners, the Missouri Catholic bishops said: “We believe this new requirement signals a direct attack on our religious freedom.”

Mike Hoey, executive director of the MCC, observed that the HHS mandate sets a dangerous precedent. “Once the principle is accepted that government can override the moral convictions of individuals and churches, then there is no reason why government cannot make further demands, such as requiring coverage for surgical abortions and other morally objectionable practices.”

This rally will call on Congress to pass S. 1467 (sponsored by Sen. Roy Blunt) and H.R. 1179 (co-sponsored by Congresspersons Todd Akin, Vicky Hartzler, Sam Graves, Billy Long and Blaine Luetkemeyer). Passage of these bills would overturn the HHS abortion-drug mandate.

The rally will also call on the Missouri General Assembly to pass SB 749, which is sponsored by State Sen. John Lamping (R-Clayton). This bill would put in state law a prohibition on government forcing religious institutions to offer health coverage for abortion drugs, sterilization or contraceptives. It would also make sure that individuals do not have to buy health plans that cover these items.

“Missouri will not wait for Congress to act,” said Mike Hoey, executive director of the MCC. “Missouri is taking the lead among the states in saying ‘NO’ to the new federal mandate.”

According to Hoey, “SB 749 will offer a way to make it known to Congress that Missouri citizens will not tolerate the loss of their religious liberties.”

The Rally for Religious Liberty will begin at 10 a.m. with registration and the opportunity to visit state legislators to urge support for SB 749. At noon, there will be speeches from public officials and prominent religious leaders. Bishop John Gaydos of Jefferson City will offer the opening prayer.

The Missouri Catholic Conference will provide additional details about this rally in the coming weeks, including prominent public officials and religious leaders who will speak at the event. Those interested can go to the Missouri Catholic Conference’s website at mocatholic.org for more details as the date of the rally approaches.

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