

DATE: January 25, 2012

TO: Diocesan Pro-Life Directors, State Catholic Conference Directors, Friends

FROM: Michael Taylor, Executive Director

### **Urge Co-sponsorship of Respect for Rights of Conscience Act**

As you now know, on January 20, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) reaffirmed the rule first issued last August that virtually all private health care plans must cover sterilization, abortifacients, and contraception. Non-profit religious employers that do not now provide such coverage, and are not exempt under the rule's extremely narrow definition of religious employer, are given one year to comply.

Responding to the announcement, Cardinal-designate Timothy Dolan, archbishop of New York and president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, stated: "In effect, the president is saying we have a year to figure out how to violate our consciences." The Obama administration "has now drawn an unprecedented line in the sand." Cardinal-designate Dolan urged that the HHS mandate be overturned. See: [www.usccb.org/news/2012/12-012.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/news/2012/12-012.cfm).

A first step is to continue to urge Members of Congress to co-sponsor the Respect for Rights of Conscience Act (H.R. 1179, S. 1467). This measure will ensure that those who participate in the health care system "retain the right to provide, purchase, or enroll in health coverage that is consistent with their religious beliefs and moral convictions."

NCHLA's Action Alert on this bill has been updated. Please see: [nchla.org/actiondisplay.asp?ID=292](http://nchla.org/actiondisplay.asp?ID=292).

For co-sponsors, please check [H.R. 1179](#) and [S. 1467](#) at: [thomas.loc.gov](http://thomas.loc.gov).

For more information related to the HHS mandate, see: [www.usccb.org/conscience](http://www.usccb.org/conscience).

Thanks for all you do in support of life!