



**JOHN D. DOAK**

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## News Release

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### **Doak joins faith community in its stand against heavy-handed health care overhaul**

**OKLAHOMA CITY** – Oklahoma Insurance Commissioner John D. Doak has taken aim at new federal regulations requiring even religious organizations to provide contraceptives and family planning services that violate their beliefs as part of their workplace health insurance plans.

Doak today continued to raise the call for overturning the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in light of recent federal policy that has jarred members of the faith community. The Obama administration has decided to require church-affiliated employers to cover birth control and abortifacients in their employee insurance plans, regardless of a given faith's beliefs on contraception.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has adopted the narrowest definition available for granting waivers to religious employers over mandated coverage, eliciting a backlash even from those who previously supported President Obama's sweeping health system reforms.

Sister Carol Keehan, president of the Catholic Health Association in Washington, which represents about 600 hospitals, said the mandate "has jolted us." Keehan's support of PPACA in 2010 was critical to the Obama administration's overcoming intense opposition from the church's American bishops.

Now, the situation those bishops feared could be coming to pass – government mandates on churches and faith-based charitable institutions.

"It's not about preventing women from buying anything themselves, but telling the church what it has to buy, and the potential for that to go further," Sister Keehan told the Associated Press.

She said the Catholic Health Association would use a one-year grace period for introducing the coverage to "pursue a correction" that would remove the mandate from faith-based employers such as the Catholic Church.

Doak notes that it isn't only Catholics who are concerned among the faith community. GuideStone Financial Resources, the benefits entity for the Southern Baptist Convention, also responded in strong terms this week to the Obama administration's health insurance mandates.

"This encroachment of religious freedom is blatant and outrageous and should be taken seriously by those of us who are part of the body of believers, as well as by others who respect and regard this nation's history and constitutional foundation," said GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins in a written statement.

GuideStone has labeled the Affordable Care Act "the greatest challenge ever confronted" by denominational health care plans. The organization is actively involved in seeking the law's total repeal.

Doak campaigned with a pledge to lead Oklahoma's fight against the Affordable Care Act. He noted that during the same 2010 election Oklahomans overwhelmingly passed a referendum opting out of the Act because voters realized mandates were the law's prime stock in trade.

"ObamaCare is all about telling everyone what they have to do – from patient, to employer, to provider," Doak said. "Citizens must buy health insurance or face penalties on their taxes. Employers must provide government-mandated coverage even for elective measures that fly in the face of a faith-based employer's religious beliefs. Providers must establish compliance departments to meet the demands of more than 300 programs now administered by the Department of Health and Human Services."

Doak encouraged leaders of the faith community to keep speaking out against unconstitutional mandates as public opposition to the Affordable Care Act mounts in the run-up to the law's 2012 date before the United States Supreme Court.

"I'm heartened that pastors and priests are not sitting idle," Doak said. "I sincerely hope that the faith community listens to their clergy members and understands their basic religious liberties are at stake. Our federal government is out of control and this is yet another example.

"I look forward to our clergy continuing to lead their congregations in this fight for religious freedom, and I anticipate a Supreme Court ruling that overturns the Affordable Care Act, returning power to the people over their own lives, beliefs and choices."

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