
Religious Freedom

Nearly two centuries ago, the founders of the Missouri Synod came to this great country seeking religious freedom. Like immigrants from many nations and many faiths, they found that freedom under the First Amendment of our U.S. Constitution. Today it is just as critical that our religious liberties be preserved. As Lutheran Americans, we must be free to put our faith into action in the public square. We must be able to provide a witness to the Gospel as we demonstrate Christ's mercy through our love and compassion for all people. The LCMS is committed to working to ensure we remain free to practice the teachings of our faith.



WHAT CAN I DO?

- ▶ Pray for our country and all those who work to preserve freedom, peace and justice (1 Tim. 2:1–2).
- ▶ Learn more about the issues causing a conflict of conscience for religious leaders, employers and individuals.
- ▶ Engage in informed discussions with friends and family.
- ▶ Participate fully in the political process and let your representatives know that these issues are important to you.

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

Go to www.lcms.org/freetobefaitful to check out:

- ▶ Articles such as “God Values Life” and “Repeating History”
- ▶ A timeline of the fight for religious liberty
- ▶ Tips on how to talk to your neighbor about religious freedom
- ▶ Frequently Asked Questions on a variety of helpful topics
- ▶ Educational and informative videos
- ▶ A sample letter you can personalize and mail to your representatives

The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod’s “Religious Liberty: Free to Be Faithful” campaign serves to involve church leaders and lay members, arming them with Synod resources for taking informed action to protect the freedom of religion.

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OVERVIEW: LCMS Reaction to the Birth Control Mandate

On Jan. 20, 2012, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced a birth control mandate requiring virtually all health plans to cover most forms of birth control, even those that can cause the death of an unborn child. The rule, or mandate, exempts churches but applies to other religious employers. On Feb. 10, President Obama announced an “accommodation” for religious employers, saying they would not have to cover birth control, but that insurance companies must provide free birth control, including “morning after” pills. The LCMS objects to the use of drugs and procedures that are used to take the lives of unborn children, who are persons in the sight of God from the time of conception.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled June 28 to largely let stand the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), the historic piece of legislation meant to extend health coverage to millions of uninsured Americans. The HHS birth control mandate is part of the law. The LCMS is opposed to the birth control mandate because it runs counter to the biblical truth of the sanctity of human life and creates a conflict of conscience for religious employers and insurers.

TIMELINE OF ACTIONS

The LCMS has taken the following action on this issue:

- ▶ **Feb. 3, 2012:** LCMS President issues statement on birth control mandate and religious freedom
 - ▶ **Feb. 14, 2012:** LCMS President says church remains ‘deeply concerned’ about health plan mandate despite White House statement
 - ▶ **Feb. 16, 2012:** LCMS President tells House Committee: LCMS ‘religiously opposed to supporting abortion-causing drugs’
 - ▶ **Feb. 27, 2012:** LCMS Council of Presidents ‘stands with’ Synod President on religious-liberty statements
 - ▶ **June 21, 2012:** LCMS President signs “Free Exercise of Religious: Putting Beliefs into Practice, An Open Letter from Religious Leaders in the United States to All Americans”
 - ▶ **June 28, 2012:** LCMS President issues statement in response to U.S. Supreme Court ruling on health care reform legislation
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