

HHS Protects Religious Freedom in Healthcare

The American taxpayer has another win for their pocketbook this week. On Friday, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [announced](#) a regulatory reform to the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) Section 1557. This section applies current civil rights laws and regulations to the healthcare industry.

In 2016, an Obama-era rule expanded Section 1557's definition of discrimination on the "basis of sex" to include pregnancy termination and gender identity. This rule put hospitals at risk of being sued if they refused to perform abortions or sex reassignment surgeries. Religious hospitals would be forced to violate their conscience and their First Amendment rights. Yet another example of the government trying to make tax-payer funded abortions and the LGBT agenda mainstream.

Even though the expansion was struck down by two federal courts, the rule still remained. Once the Trump Administration noticed this massive overreach of the federal government, they took action to rescind the rule. Now, HHS's current revised rule will conform with the recognized understanding of "basis of sex" that is commonly held by the court, which does not include pregnancy termination or gender identity. The new rule is estimated to save Americans about [\\$3.6 billion](#) in regulatory costs over a five-year period and will continue to enforce real discrimination in healthcare on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, and sex.

As expected, abortion-rights and LGBT groups have [filed lawsuits](#) to block the rule. While the court process takes time, we fully expect the rule to eventually be upheld. Eagle Forum applauds HHS for taking a bold step to protect religious freedom in the healthcare industry.