

Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20515

May 21, 2009

Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

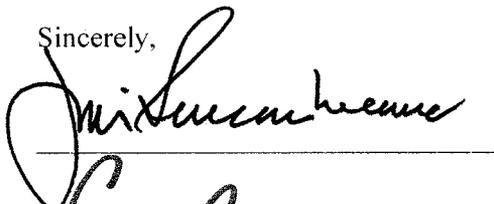
Congratulations on being selected and confirmed as Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). In this role, you are entrusted with important responsibilities. We wish you the best of luck as you work with Members of Congress and the Administration to protect the health of all Americans.

As the new leader of the Department responsible for enforcing conscience protection laws, we are writing to you regarding President Obama's recent comments to graduates at the University of Notre Dame. As you know, the President expressed his support to allow pro-life health care providers the right to refuse to participate in procedures they find morally reprehensible.

Although federal law has long forbidden discrimination against health care professionals who refuse to participate in an abortion or provide referrals for them, late last year regulations were issued requiring institutions that receive federal funding to certify their compliance with laws protecting conscience rights. The regulation also promoted education within the medical community regarding their rights and provided an avenue of recourse in the event of discrimination through the Office of Civil Rights within HHS.

We respectfully request that you honor the deeply held convictions of millions of Americans and rescind the review of the current conscience protection regulation. In the absence of guidance and education, cases of discrimination may go unchecked and professionals may continue to leave their fields, exacerbating the health care workforce crisis that is already plaguing our country. Additionally, we urge you to commit to defending conscience protections in future rulemaking that affects both individual and institutional health care providers. We look forward to working with you in protecting the consciences of healthcare workers across the country.

Sincerely,















Wally Herger

Pat Spitzer

W. G. ...

Cynthia Hummel

Shirley ...

Ken ...

Harold ...

Richard Bachmann

MM

Steve King

Alan Thompson

Rail ...

Steve ...

Ron Paul

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John ...

Jack ...

Mark ...

Barrett

Kenny ...

Guil ...

Paul ...

Jim ...

Dan ...