

# Cardinal O'Malley, Archbishop Lori to Senate: Oppose Bill that Attacks Religious Freedom

July 14, 2014

WASHINGTON—In a letter sent July 14 to all U.S. Senators, Cardinal Seán O'Malley of Boston and Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore stated their “strong opposition to the misnamed ‘Protect Women’s Health From Corporate Interference Act of 2014’ (S. 2578).” Cardinal O'Malley and Archbishop Lori chair the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’s Committee on Pro-Life Activities and Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, respectively.

“Though cast as a response to the Supreme Court’s narrow decision in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*, the bill ranges far beyond that decision, potentially attacking all existing federal protections of conscience and religious freedom regarding health coverage mandates,” they wrote.

The two bishops identified several areas of concern with the bill, including its unprecedented curtailment of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993; its potential for overriding other federal conscience protections, including the Hyde-Weldon amendment on abortion; its application to coverage mandates beyond the HHS contraceptive mandate; its application to employers beyond for-profit businesses; and its denial of religious freedom for employees and their minor dependents, not just employers.

“In short, the bill does not befit a nation committed to religious liberty. Indeed, if it were to pass, it would call that commitment into question. Nor does it show a genuine commitment to expanded health coverage, as it would pressure many Americans of faith to stop providing or purchasing health coverage altogether. We oppose the bill and urge you to reject it,” they wrote.

Full text of the letter is available online: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/upload/07-14-14-S-2578-Cardinal-O-Malley-Archbishop-Lori-to-Senate.pdf>

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