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Group Health Plans and Health Insurance Issuers Relating to Coverage of Preventive Services under Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act: Amendment

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General Comment

While I respect everyone's religious beliefs I also think we need to respect the individual rights of employees to proper health care and preventative care including birth control if that's what is determined to be desired or necessary. In this case, I'd like to make sure that businesses, even religiously-founded nonprofits, aren't allowed to withhold important health care choices from their employees on the grounds of the business owner's religious feelings. Churches are in a unique position but nonprofits serve a wide variety of people and employ a wide variety as well; those not primarily engaged in spreading religious doctrine should not be included in the HRSA exemptions without consideration of the employees affected. Keep the current regulations. Let churches maintain exemptions but don't widen the definitions!

Religion has affected lawmaking before (see Pennsylvania's Blue Laws, which make car sales illegal on Sundays, among other stupidities) but that doesn't mean we need to let it continue. I don't see that it affects one's religious freedoms to require a business to offer a CHOICE of health care to their employees; if all employees follow the employer's religious ideals the choice will simply never be utilized, if they do not then their freedoms should not be infringed simply because of their employer's feelings. Especially in the current economic climate, finding a new job that provides the necessary health care coverage can be difficult; we shouldn't make it harder for women, especially low-income women, to have access to birth control and preventative care.

A compromise (the ability to file for an opt-out if a certain % of employees agree to it, as they are the ones affected!) might be acceptable. At least then the women involved will have a voice!