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**To:** [E-OHPSCA2713.EBSA](#)  
**Subject:** Access to Preventative Care and Contraception  
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I join with the American Association of University Women (AAUW) in asking you to accept the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine as it pertains to coverage of preventive care under the new health care law, and to reject any exemptions for "religious employers." These preventive services are a critical element of the new law and would provide countless women better access to necessary health care.

While AAUW believes that "religious refusal" exemptions unjustly deny women access to contraceptive services, others, driven by an ideological distaste for all contraceptive services, are pushing the government to make exemptions even larger. Indeed, some groups are pushing for the exemption to apply to religiously-run health providers, so hospitals with religious affiliations would be exempt from the coverage requirement, even though they employ people of all faiths and ideologies. If granted, this larger exemption would deny access to thousands of women just because of where they work.

Personally, I am a devout Christian and strongly believe in the separation of church and state. Religion has no place in the workforce, our government or the healthcare industry. It is a personal issue and should be nobody's business, but there are those who are making it EVERYONE'S business. Religion should not be used as a pawn or excuse to refuse benefits to people in need. If you want to profess your faith, go to church, but don't make laws around it. Employers are not supposed to discriminate and that's exactly what will happen if you allow them to exempt themselves under "religious refusal". This is absurd. They are employers. I feel the same way about pharmacists filling prescriptions for women that they have a moral and religious problem with (morning after pill or contraceptives). If they can't fulfill the duties of their chosen job, then they should find another job that doesn't challenge their religious beliefs. SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE.

I urge you to ensure that women of ALL faiths and those with NO faith at all, have access to quality preventive care by accepting IOM's recommendations and rejecting the proposed religious refusal exemption provisions.

Thank you.