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AMASH, CALVIN COLLEGE DOCTOR QUESTION MANDATE

MEDICAL DIRECTOR AT CALVIN COLLEGE TESTIFIES BEFORE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Washington, D.C. – Rep. Justin Amash (R-MI) welcomed Dr. Laura Champion, the Medical Director of Health Services at Calvin College, to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform to testify about a controversial new federal mandate. The policy, announced several weeks ago by Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, requires religious organizations to offer contraceptives, sterilizations, and abortifacients—even if doing so violates the groups’ religious beliefs.

Beginning in 2013, HHS will require religious charities, hospitals, and universities to offer health care plans to employees that cover various contraceptives, such as “Plan B” and IUDs. The HHS rule builds upon the individual mandate contained in the President’s health care legislation.

Dr. Champion joined university officials and clergy from around the country in explaining how the mandate could require them to violate their deeply held religious beliefs.

“Forcing [Calvin’s] Health Services to be part of the distribution of abortifacients is an affront to our principles and sends an inaccurate message to our students. Requiring coverage of abortifacient agents is in direct contradiction to the spiritual and behavioral standards that Calvin College expects of ourselves and our students,” said Dr. Champion.

On February 2, Amash and more than 100 other Representatives sent a letter to Sebelius asking her to withdraw the new mandate. A week later, President Obama announced a slight adjustment to the policy. According to the announcement, religious groups still will have to purchase health insurance that provides abortifacients. The only change in the new policy is that employees will have to request that coverage from insurance companies, whereas the coverage was automatic in the originally announced policy.

“The President’s ‘compromise’ proposal is little more than a political stunt,” said Amash. “The federal government still will require religious groups to pay for contraceptive procedures that violate their deeply held beliefs. That’s wrong, and the American people won’t stand for it.”

Amash thanked Dr. Champion for traveling to Washington, D.C., to testify. “As the only doctor on the panel, Dr. Champion’s testimony added crucial insight to the discussion. Her expertise and her real world perspective on this new mandate were invaluable,” said Amash.

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