

# States file suit over Obama's birth control plan

February 24 2012

---

Seven US states have filed a lawsuit challenging a requirement in President Barack Obama's 2010 health care law that religious organizations provide insurance covering birth control.

The lawsuit filed Thursday, which also lists three Catholic organizations as plaintiffs, threatens to deepen a vicious election-year row over contraception despite a compromise announced by the president earlier this month.

The attorneys general of Nebraska, Florida, Michigan, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Texas allege that the requirement that religious organizations purchase employee health insurance to cover contraception violates the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion.

"This regulation forces millions of Americans to choose between following [religious convictions](#) and complying with federal law," Nebraska Attorney General Jon Bruning said in a statement.

"We will not stand idly by while our constitutionally guaranteed liberties are discarded by an administration that has sworn to uphold them," he said.

Conservatives and groups affiliated with the Catholic Church -- which opposes contraception -- say the law forces them to pay for services they view as wrong, while supporters say [birth control](#) is vital to women's health.

In a concession earlier this month, Obama said the government would not require religious organizations to offer free contraception on employee health plans, but placed the onus on [insurance companies](#) to cover such services.

The Nebraska attorney general's office said, however, that "the proposed change did nothing to address the fundamental First Amendment violation and was never officially made."

The fight erupted when the administration decided not to exempt religious employers from a requirement under its landmark [health reform](#) law that work-based insurance plans offer women coverage for contraception.

Officials argued that a woman who works, for example, as a nurse at a Catholic hospital might not share her employer's religious opposition to [contraception](#) and should have the same rights as female workers elsewhere.

Catholic leaders were outraged -- though houses of worship were exempt -- and Republicans used the row to whip up a social issues storm, firing up their conservative political base in an election year.

The lawsuit filed in a US district court in Nebraska on Thursday also lists as plaintiffs Pius X Catholic High School, Catholic Social Services, The Catholic Mutual Relief Society of America and two private citizens.

(c) 2012 AFP

Citation: States file suit over Obama's birth control plan (2012, February 24) retrieved 16 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-02-states-obama-birth.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private

study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.