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## **American Freedom Law Center Challenges HHS Mandate in D.C. Federal Court on behalf of Catholic Company**

Washington, D.C. (May 1, 2013) — Late yesterday, the American Freedom Law Center (AFLC) filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, challenging the constitutionality of the Obama administration’s HHS “contraception” mandate. The lawsuit was filed on behalf of Johnson Welded Products, Inc. (“JWP”), a family owned and operated company in Ohio, and its President and principal owner, Ms. Lilli Johnson, a Catholic, who opposes the HHS mandate based on her sincerely-held religious beliefs.

The HHS mandate, which will apply in full force to JWP on July 1 of this year, requires Ms. Johnson and JWP to provide coverage for contraception, sterilization, and abortifacients (drugs that chemically induce abortion) in JWP’s health care plan or face fines of up to \$27,000 per day.

As the majority owner of JWP, Ms. Johnson strives to run her company consistent with her Catholic beliefs. As alleged in the complaint, Ms. Johnson holds and actively professes religious beliefs that include traditional Christian teaching on the nature and purpose of human sexuality. In particular, in accordance with Pope Paul VI’s 1968 encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, she believes that human sexuality has two primary purposes: to “most closely unit[e] husband and wife” and “for the generation of new lives.” Ms. Johnson believes and actively professes the Catholic Church teaching that “[t]o use this divine gift destroying, even if only partially, its meaning and purpose is to contradict the nature both of man and of woman and of their most intimate relationship, and therefore it is to contradict also the plan of God and His Will.” Consequently, the HHS mandate is forcing her to choose between following her religious beliefs or committing a grave sin. If she chooses to follow her religious beliefs and convictions, then she and JWP will be subject to severe fines and penalties that would have a crippling impact on JWP’s ability to survive economically.

AFLC Co-Founder and Senior Counsel Robert J. Muise commented: “Through the HHS mandate, the Obama administration has declared war on religious freedom and has engaged in a *true* war on women. As Pope Paul VI prophetically warned in *Humanae Vitae*, contraception has opened up a ‘wide and easy road . . . towards conjugal infidelity and the general lowering of morality.’ Consequently, as the Pope predicted, the extensive use of contraception, which is promoted by the HHS mandate, has caused man ‘to lose respect for the woman . . . to the point of considering her as a mere instrument of selfish enjoyment, and no longer as his respected and beloved companion.’”

As alleged in the complaint, the HHS mandate violates JWP’s and Ms. Johnson’s rights to the free exercise of religion and the freedom of speech under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, and the Administrative Procedure Act. The complaint asks the federal court to declare that the HHS mandate is unconstitutional and to permanently enjoin its enforcement.

AFLC Co-Founder and Senior Counsel David Yerushalmi commented: “As an orthodox Jew who objects to this mandate on religious and constitutional grounds, I can say with confidence that observant Jews are as opposed to Obama’s assault on religious freedom as are those in the Christian communities across the country. In this battle, we all stand as one, shoulder to shoulder, against the Obama administration’s latest assault. America was founded on religious freedom. AFLC is committed to stopping Obama’s war on this fundamental liberty founded in our Judeo-Christian traditions.”

The ***American Freedom Law Center*** is a Judeo-Christian law firm that fights for faith and freedom. It accomplishes its mission through litigation, public policy initiatives, and related activities. It does not charge for its services. The Law Center is supported by contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations, and is recognized by the IRS as a section 501(c)(3) organization. Visit us at [www.americanfreedomlawcenter.org](http://www.americanfreedomlawcenter.org).

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