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## **American Freedom Law Center Challenges Obama’s “Contraception” Mandate in New York Federal Court**

New York (February 15, 2012)—Today, the American Freedom Law Center (AFLC), along with co-counsel and civil rights attorney Charles S. LiMandri, filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York, challenging the constitutionality of the Obama administration’s “contraception” mandate. The lawsuit was filed on behalf of Priests for Life, a national, Catholic, pro-life organization based in New York.

AFLC Co-Founder and Senior Counsel Robert J. Muise commented, “The Obama administration has declared war on the Bill of Rights, and in particular, it has declared war on religious freedom. In his zeal to placate his secular base on the far left, Obama has trashed the Constitution and has unwittingly united people of faith.”

As alleged in the complaint, Obama’s “contraception” mandate “violates Priests for Life’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 mandate requires employers, including Priests for Life, to provide insurance plans that include coverage for contraception, sterilization, abortifacients, and related education and counseling or incur substantial penalty fines. This mandate directly conflicts with the deeply-held religious beliefs of Priests for Life.

Moreover, by requiring Priests for Life to provide education and counseling regarding contraceptive methods, sterilization procedures, and abortifacients, the mandate also compels Priests for Life to engage in speech that violates its sincerely-held religious beliefs in violation of the First Amendment.

Priests for Life 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*, Priests for Life believes that human sexuality has two primary purposes: to “most closely unit[e] husband and wife” and “for the generation of new lives.” Priests for Life 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.” Priests for Life believes and teaches that “any action which either before, at the moment of, or after sexual intercourse, is specifically intended to prevent procreation, whether as an end or as a means”—including contraception and sterilization—is a grave sin.

The complaint asks the federal court to declare that the “contraceptive” 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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