

# **BIDEN'S OMINOUS HHS RULE; CATHOLICS ASKED TO RESPOND**

The Biden administration has already proven to be a radical advocate of abortion-on-demand and transgender rights. Worse, these policies almost always come at the expense of religious liberty. Its latest iteration is a proposed rule change from the Trump years that would threaten the rights of Catholic doctors and the autonomy of Catholic hospitals.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) wants to amend Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act (a.k.a. ObamaCare) to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex to include "sexual orientation and gender identity."

The effect of this change would be dramatic. To begin with, there is a profound difference between discriminating against a biological female and a man who claims to be female, and vice versa. No one supports discrimination against real women, but to force Catholic doctors and hospitals to perform genital mutilation surgery on men who want to "transition" to a woman is a violation of their First Amendment right to religious liberty.

Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore, Archbishop Paul Coakley of Oklahoma City, Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone of San Francisco and Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York chair important committees of the bishops' conference, and they released a statement denouncing the proposed rule change as being inimical to religious liberty.

They did not buy the idea, floated by the Biden administration, that claims the new rule would have no impact on religious liberty. "Assurances that HHS will honor religious freedom laws offer little comfort when HHS is actively fighting court rulings that declared HHS violated

religious freedom laws the last time they tried to impose such a mandate.”

The proposed rule change would not only infringe on the First Amendment rights of Catholics, its support for puberty blockers would threaten the well-being of children: it is positively dangerous.

It is important that Catholics speak out. The public has until October 3rd to comment on the proposed rule change. On our website, we have already provided Catholics with a written step-by-step guide to facilitate the process of commenting online.

Those who would like to write a letter in the regular mail must do so now. Please hone in on the threat to religious liberty as the responses will be grouped by subject matter. Please write to the following address.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights, Attn: 1557 NPRM (RIN 0945-AA17, Hubert H. Humphrey Bldg., Rm. 509F, 200 Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20201.