

CALIF. MEDICAL ASSOC. TEAMS WITH ACLU

In an unprecedented move, the California Medical Association has filed a motion to join an ACLU lawsuit that would force Catholic hospitals to act in violation of Church moral teaching. The lawsuit, which has already been rejected by a Superior Court in San Francisco, would force Mercy Medical Center in Redding, as well as the 29 other Catholic facilities in the Dignity Health network, to perform sterilization procedures in violation of Catholic teaching.

By its own admission, this is the first time the California Medical Association has moved to take legal action challenging a religious hospital system over its faith-based rules. In doing so, it has joined the ACLU's nationwide campaign of aggression against the religious freedom of Catholic hospitals—a campaign that has been repeatedly struck down by the courts. As San Francisco Superior Court Judge Ernest Goldsmith said in his January ruling in favor of Mercy Medical Center, “Religious-based hospitals have an enshrined place in American history and its communities, and the religious beliefs reflected in their operation are not to be interfered with by courts at this moment in history.”

This is not exclusively a Catholic issue. As law professor Steven H. Resnicoff, co-director of the Center for Jewish Law and Judaic Studies at DePaul University, explained, “Jewish law generally opposes abortion. Governmental measures that would require Jews or Jewish organizations to assist or enable conduct that violates Jewish law, such as religiously impermissible abortions, would impinge on their religious freedom.”

Yet the ACLU seems exclusively focused on attacking the religious freedom of Catholic hospitals to operate according

to their religious beliefs. The California Medical Association should think long and hard about whether they want to be led down that road of religious intolerance by the ACLU.