

FIGHT FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY MOUNTS

The U.S. bishops made it clear over the summer that the Fortnight for Freedom was hardly the extent of their efforts to challenge the HHS mandate.

Daniel Cardinal DiNardo heralded the inclusion of the Abortion Non-Discrimination Act, and key provisions from the Respect for Rights of Conscience Act, in the appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2013 of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor/HHS. These measures would strengthen the right of health care providers not to provide for abortion, and protect religious entities who object to those parts of ObamaCare they deem objectionable.

That same week, while the seven states that filed suit against the so-called contraception mandate lost when a U.S. District judge said they lacked standing, he noted something important: that “the rule is currently undergoing a process of amendment to accommodate these organizations.”

What Judge Warren Urbom said is true, and perhaps the discussions will yield positive results. But if they do not, the Catholic community is not walking away. Importantly, Catholics are not alone. Another development occurred when Wheaton College, a distinguished Protestant institution, joined Catholic University of America in suing over the mandate purely on religious-liberty grounds.

Moreover, in July the Religious Freedom Tax Repeal Act was introduced by Rep. James Sensenbrenner and Rep. Diane Black. It would block any punitive taxes from being levied on religious organizations that refuse to accede to the anti-religious liberty components of ObamaCare. It was also announced that Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of

Chicago joined the Catholic Charities of the Dioceses of Joliet and Springfield in challenging these components.

We will continue to monitor the development regarding the fight for our religious liberty. Stay tuned.