

# HHS MANDATE DISPUTE GOES UNREPORTED



Bill Donohue comments on media coverage of H.R. 940, the Health Care Conscience Rights Act:

Two weeks have elapsed since a bill was introduced by Rep. Diane Black that challenges the Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate, and still no reporting on it by the mainstream media. The bill, which has the explicit support of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), provides conscience rights protections in health care. Specifically, the legislation would ensure that the ObamaCare regulation that forces employers to provide coverage for abortion-inducing drugs, sterilization and contraception could not override the conscience rights of objecting parties.

Cardinal Sean O'Malley, who heads the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities, wrote to every member of the House on March 8 asking for their support. He urged them to make this a priority, incorporating it in the upcoming "must-pass" legislation. For a good analysis of this controversy, see today's article by Terry Jeffrey at [cnsnews.com](http://cnsnews.com).

When it comes to Catholic issues, the big dailies don't lack for coverage. But on this dispute, which pits the bishops against the Obama administration, there has been a blackout. Among those not reporting on this story are the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Miami Herald*, the *Dallas Morning News*, the *Houston Chronicle*, the *Denver Post*, the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Los Angeles Times*. The lone newspaper that

has covered this subject is the *Washington Times*. Not surprisingly, the failure of these newspapers to report on this story accounts for the lack of coverage by the broadcast news programs, as well as cable TV.

Religious liberty should mean something even to those who are not observant. At stake is whether the federal government can impose a secular agenda on people of faith. Catholics, in particular, have been involved in this fight ever since the HHS mandate was introduced. For the media to ignore this issue is simply irresponsible.