

PETITION TO WITHDRAW HHS MANDATE

The Catholic League launched a petition drive on August 19 calling on visitors to our website to convince the Obama administration to pull its Health and Human Service (HHS) mandate. It has had plenty of time to fix the problem it created.

The Catholic community, led by the bishops, has voiced its objections to the HHS mandate on several occasions. The Obama administration has made “accommodations” and other revisions, but the fundamental problem remains: the HHS mandate adopts a definition of what constitutes a “religious employer” that is entirely too narrow; and the religious liberty abridgement entailed in this edict represents an unfair burden on Catholic non-profit organizations, and Catholic-owned private businesses.

The amount of time and money spent trying to reconcile the HHS mandate with legitimate First Amendment concerns has been considerable, and without a satisfactory conclusion. Indeed, almost 70 lawsuits have been filed. The only sensible outcome is for the administration to withdraw the mandate altogether.

The problems inherent in ObamaCare are serious. From delaying “out-of-pocket costs” to postponing the employer mandate, it is evident that even those who support this legislation are growing weary. Add to this the more than a thousand waivers that have been granted, and the loss of support by labor unions, and the result is alarming. But none of these factors are as important as the constitutional issues that the HHS mandate presents: even if ObamaCare can be salvaged, the problems posed by the mandate remain.

The petition drive ends on September 30. We will forward the

petitions to Health and Human Service Secretary Kathleen Sebelius on October 1. We are not Pollyannaish: we know our effort is not going to inspire the Obama team to drop the mandate. Our goal is more modest. We hope to send an unmistakable message to the U.S. Supreme Court. After all, it is the justices who are likely to decide the fate of the HHS mandate.