

# RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AFFIRMED



Bill Donohue comments on the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling today in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores*:

Today's victory is welcomed by true advocates of the First Amendment. However, because of the unremitting hostility this administration has shown to religious liberty, especially in its lust for abortion rights, Congress needs to pass the Health Care Rights of Conscience Act.

Today's ruling has important implications. It recognizes, for the first time, that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) applies to "closely held" businesses, or corporations owned by a few people. This law prohibits the federal government from any action that substantially burdens the exercise of religion, unless that action is the least restrictive way of serving a compelling government interest.

Practically speaking, the ruling will have a limited effect on private sector employers. The vast majority of Americans work for companies that already provide for most forms of contraceptive coverage, including abortifacients. Nonetheless, this decision will further disable ObamaCare: Over 100 million are already exempt, and now we can add "Hobby Lobby" type businesses to the list. Not for nothing does Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg fear that this ruling may cause "havoc" to ObamaCare. Hope she's right.

Politically speaking, the ruling will have a dramatic effect: it sends an unmistakable message to the Obama administration that it cannot continue to run roughshod over the religious liberty rights of Americans.

Critics of Hobby Lobby have been trotting out horror stories about what will happen if their side loses. Nonsense. RFRA was passed 21 years ago, and no horror stories have been recorded. Scare tactics don't work.

Next up are the Catholic non-profits. We'll win on that one, too, only by a much bigger margin.