

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND THE GAY GENE

A recent Gallup poll found that 73 to 80 percent of the public consider the following issues to be either extremely important or very important in this year's presidential election campaign: healthcare; unemployment; the federal budget deficit and national debt; international issues, including national defense and terrorism; and gas prices. Only 44 percent answered that way when asked about government policies on birth control.

The issue of government policies on birth control is a non-starter. Anyone who wants contraception can get it either inexpensively or for free. No one running for president is threatening to change things. So why ask the question? The goal is to turn what is primarily a First Amendment right to religious liberty into a battle over the pill. When the public is asked about the right to a religious exemption, or the right to choose among competing insurance plans, the results are quite different.

Here's a thought experiment. Suppose there is a gay gene. Suppose prospective parents can learn whether a gay gene is present in their unborn baby. Suppose a president proposes that employee insurance carriers, including religious non-profits, must cover abortions in those instances where prospective parents elect to abort their gay-gene carrying unborn baby.

A survey could consider several issues: preventive health care; the First Amendment right to religious liberty; the public funding of abortion; and the intentional weeding out of the homosexual population. If the issue were framed as a debate over the propriety of the government spending public funds for preventive health care, would this be an accurate

way to pose the question?

Get it? It's time to stop playing the birth-control card and start addressing federal encroachment on the religious rights of Americans.