

RELIGIOUS RIGHTS REJECTED

In March, the Senate voted 51-48 to table the “Respect for Rights of Conscience Act”; an amendment by Sen. Roy Blunt that would have guaranteed rights of conscience for the employees of religious institutions. However, this does not end the debate.

Despite this vote, a bill remains in the House sponsored by Rep. Jeff Fortenberry that would also secure conscience rights for people of faith; it has garnered a near-majority of House members. Also available as a possible remedy are the rights encoded in the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. And, of course, the U.S. Supreme Court is expected to make a decision on ObamaCare in late spring.

The Obama administration has chosen to shut out the Catholic voice (save for the dissidents). Consider the following:

- Bishop William Lori has said that there was no discussion between administration officials and the bishops prior to the decisions of January 20 and February 10 that effectively mandated Catholic institutions to pay for abortion-inducing drugs, contraception and sterilization.
- HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius has admitted under questioning that the Justice Department was never asked to consider the religious-rights implications of her draconian directive.
- Dr. Linda Rosenstock, who served on a committee of the Institute of Medicine that was empowered to study the HHS mandate, said on Tuesday that at no time did anyone on the committee ever weigh the issue of religious rights.

Obama does not want to dialogue—he wants to dictate.