

TRUMP MUST NIX HHS MANDATE

The Catholic Benefits Association (CBA), which provides health coverage to many Catholic entities, is asking President Trump to repeal and replace the Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate that was sponsored by President Obama. We second that call: Trump's Justice Department continues to inexplicably honor an appeal to the Tenth Circuit that seeks to undo the CBA's injunctive relief from the HHS mandate.

"No government action in American history has ever resulted in more lawsuits by religious organizations," says the CBA. Moreover, the reasons brokered are wholly indefensible.

The HHS mandate fundamentally guts the right of Catholic non-profits to provide healthcare that is consistent with Catholic teachings. Worse, it grants the government the right to decide whether a Catholic institution is sufficiently Catholic, thus obliterating church and state lines.

Make no mistake about it, granting the right of the federal government to decide whether a Catholic association is truly Catholic is a pernicious power grab, one that flies in the face of the First Amendment guarantee of religious liberty. This is clearly the most draconian element of the HHS mandate.

What makes this all the more disturbing is the ruling by the Trump administration's HHS declaring the ObamaCare HHS mandate illegal. Why, then, the foot dragging on the part of the Justice Department?

The Trump administration does not have to wait for a repeal of ObamaCare to do what is morally and constitutionally right—it can repeal the HHS mandate at any time.

We all understand the frustration that accompanies the slow rate of presidential appointees, but this issue does not turn on new personnel: Attorney General Jeff Sessions can withdraw

the Tenth Circuit appeal without delay.

One way or the other, Catholics need to know whether the president is going to fulfill his pledge to protect the religious liberty of the Little Sisters of the Poor, as well as all the other Catholic groups that are party to these lawsuits.