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Major Mainstream Religious Leaders Support White House on Contraceptive Coverage In Health Care Reform

February 8, 2012, Washington, DC – Today, twenty major mainstream religious leaders released a statement supporting the January 20, 2012 announcement by the Department of Health and Human Services that contraceptive services must be covered by most insurance policies without deductibles or co-pays, and that only purely sectarian organizations are exempt from this requirement.

Catholics for Choice; the Central Conference of American Rabbis; Concerned Clergy for Choice; Disciples Justice Action Network; Episcopal Divinity School; Episcopal Women's Caucus; Hadassah; the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation; Jewish Women International; Methodist Federation for Social Action; Muslims for Progressive Values; the National Council of Jewish Women; Planned Parenthood Clergy Advisory Board; the Rabbinical Assembly; the Religious Coalition to Reproductive Choice; the Religious Institute; Society for Humanistic Judaism; The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism; Union Theological Seminary; Unitarian Universalist Association; and United Church of Christ represent millions of religious leaders and people of faith across the country.

Together, the leaders of these Christian, Jewish and Muslim national organizations affirmed:

“We stand with President Obama and Secretary Sebelius in their decision to reaffirm the importance of contraceptive services as essential preventive care for women under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, and to assure access under the law to American women, regardless of religious affiliation. We respect individuals' moral agency to make decisions about their sexuality and reproductive health without governmental interference or legal restrictions. We do not believe that specific religious doctrine belongs in health care reform – as we value our nation's commitment to church-state separation. We believe that women and men have the right to decide whether or not to apply the principles of their faith to family planning decisions, and to do so they must have access to services. The Administration was correct in requiring institutions that do not have purely sectarian goals to offer comprehensive preventive health care. Our leaders have the responsibility to safeguard individual religious liberty and to help improve the health of women, their children, and families. Hospitals and universities across the religious spectrum have an obligation to assure that individuals'

conscience and decisions are respected and that their students and employees have access to this basic health care service. We invite other religious leaders to speak out with us for universal coverage of contraception.”

Signed,

Catholics for Choice, Jon O'Brien, President
Central Conference of American Rabbis, Rabbi Jonathan Stein, President
Concerned Clergy for Choice, Rabbi Dennis Ross, Director
Disciples Justice Action Network, Rev. Dr. Ken Brooker Langston, Director
Episcopal Divinity School, The Very Reverend Dr. Katherine Hancock Ragsdale, President
Episcopal Women's Caucus, Rev. Dr Elizabeth Kaeton, Convener
Hadassah, Marcie Natan, National President
Jewish Reconstructionist Federation, Robert Barkin, Interim Executive Vice President
Jewish Women International, Lori Weinstein, Executive Director
Methodist Federation for Social Action, Jill Warren, Executive Director
Muslims for Progressive Values, Ani Zonneveld, President
National Council of Jewish Women, Nancy Kaufman, CEO
Planned Parenthood Clergy Advisory Board, Rev. Jane Emma Newall, Chair
Rabbinical Assembly, Rabbi Julie Schonfeld, Executive Vice President
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, Rev. Steve Clapp, Chair
Religious Institute, Rev. Dr. Debra W. Haffner, Executive Director
Society for Humanistic Judaism, M. Bonnie Cousens, Executive Director
The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, Rabbi Steven Wernick, CEO
Union Theological Seminary, Rev. Dr. Serene Jones, President
Unitarian Universalist Association, Rev. Peter Morales, President
United Church of Christ, Rev. Geoffrey Black, General Minister and President

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