



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 10, 2012

STATEMENT FROM ARCHBISHOP ROBERT J. CARLSON **ON OBAMA COMPROMISE TO HHS MANDATE**

St. Louis, MO--Today, the Obama Administration announced it will implement a policy which “accommodates religious liberty while protecting the health of women.” While it is positive that the administration continues to review the issue, it remains to be seen whether today’s announced action will form the basis of a resolution.

Unfortunately, what this accommodation really means is that religious groups will still be forced to purchase healthcare coverage that includes contraception and abortifacients. The fact that the responsibility is now on the insurance companies is simply a matter of semantics. It does not appear that there is any substantive change from the original regulation requiring health plans sponsored by religiously affiliated entities to provide contraceptives, sterilizations and abortion inducing drugs to which we have objected.

We cannot lose sight of the fact that the issue at hand is the protection of one of our most basic freedoms—the freedom of religious rights. What President Obama’s Administration presented today does not yet appear to be the best possible solution to this gravely important matter.

To echo the statement released today by Cardinal-designate Timothy Dolan, president of USCCB, this dialogue must be kept open. We have not yet reached agreement on the matter. The Archdiocese of St. Louis is, at this point, unable to say whether the proposal of President Obama for the resolution of the problems created by the contraception, sterilization, and availability of abortion inducing drugs mandate of his administration will provide any relief for religiously affiliated employers.

Let us call to mind a statement from the Congressional documents of the United States, “The framers of the Constitution recognized the eternal principle that man’s relation with his God is above human legislation and his rights of conscience inalienable. . . It is an inborn principle which nothing can eradicate.”