

PRESS RELEASE

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Catholic Students for Women's Health Support Birth Control Coverage
Coalition of students from Catholic universities and local DC campuses applaud HHS regulations providing birth control without co-pay, tell Bishops to "back off"

"We are here today speaking out for millions of students across the country that applaud the Obama administration's regulations and demand our right to exercise our individual religious freedoms by making personal medical decisions without interference from religious authorities," says Callie Otto, Co-Founder of the Catholic University Students for Choice, at today's Catholic Students for Women's Health press conference in Washington, DC.

Students from Catholic universities are joined today by their colleagues from other local campuses in support of the regulations recently proposed by the Department of Health and Human Services requiring birth control coverage without co-pays or deductible and responding to the subsequent outcry from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"We will not back down because we believe that the religious freedom of individual Catholics and students, no matter what their faith, and the need for comprehensive women's healthcare must take priority to the demands of the Catholic Bishops," Otto continued.

"Access to birth control is a matter of health and human rights," said Tea Sefer, board member of American University Students for Choice. "We all need to acknowledge these basic facts. Women deserve to make decisions for themselves, without anyone else, Catholic Bishop or not, restricting their access to family planning tools."

According to Georgetown Law Students for Reproductive Justice member Sandra Fluke, "In the worst cases, women who needed this medication for other medical reasons have suffered dire consequences. Just one example of many is a friend of mine. Her inability to access these prescriptions caused the loss of her ovary. These burdens are not shared by our male student colleagues."

"Most women use contraception at some point in their life, including 98% of Catholic women¹," says Keely Monroe, Fordham University alumnus. "Judging by the fact that only 10% of US Catholics believe that church leaders have the final say about contraception², I think we can all agree that a woman's own conscience matters the most in matters relating to her health and life."

¹ National Survey of Family Growth/Centers for Disease Control, cited in R.K. Jones and J. Dreweke, "Countering Conventional Wisdom: New Evidence on Religion and Contraceptive Use," Guttmacher Institute, April 2011.

² National Catholic Reporter, "Right and Wrong: Who Has the Final Say?" October 24, 2011.