



CARDINAL RIGALI CENTER
20 ARCHBISHOP MAY DRIVE
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI 63119
P) 314.792.7841
F) 314.792.7842
WWW.ARCHSTL.ORG

ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

October 23, 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On October 13th, the departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, and the Treasury of the United States Government, entered into an historic settlement agreement with 74 religious organizations, including the Archdiocese of St. Louis and Catholic Charities of St. Louis. In a series of lawsuits, the religious organizations challenged Department of Health and Human Services regulations that would have required these entities to provide employee health plans that included contraceptives, abortifacients, and sterilization procedures, in violation of their religious beliefs.

The historic settlement in effect grants a permanent injunction prohibiting these regulations or any similar future regulations from being enforced against the Archdiocese of St. Louis, Catholic Charities, and the other religious organizations.

The U.S. Government agreed that the proposed regulations imposed a substantial burden on the free exercise of religion as guaranteed in the Constitution and violated the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. The regulations, if enforced, would have given the federal government unprecedented power to determine which institutions were “religious” or not by imposing a flawed religious test. These regulations subjected Catholic institutions to crippling fines, property seizures, and other regulatory burdens and penalties, which because of this settlement are no longer possible, now or in the future.

This historic settlement brings to an end many years of litigation, tension, and uncertainty for Catholic institutions. After long negotiations, offers of flawed accommodations, and many, many prayers, we have finally prevailed in this unwelcomed fight for religious liberty – a fight which was not of our making. We must remain vigilant in our defense of this first, most cherished freedom in the years to come. I am most grateful to the Jones Day law firm for their tireless efforts on our behalf in this litigation and settlement. To the countless men and women who have offered prayers, public witness, and material support, I also offer my heartfelt gratitude.

Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, Patroness of the Americas, pray for us!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Robert J. Carlson
Archbishop of St. Louis