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Bush Administration Rule Riles Abortion Advocates

"People should not be forced to say or do things they believe are morally wrong," Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt, said according to the *Washington Post*. "Health-care workers should not be forced to provide services that violate their own conscience."

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Website, "the Department proposes to include participation in any activity with a reasonable connection to the objectionable procedure, including referrals, training, and other arrangements for offending procedures."



Opponents of the plan feel that this regulation will limit services necessary for women to make informed choices. According to Cecile Richards, president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, "The Bush administration's proposed regulation poses a serious threat to women's health care by limiting the rights of patients to receive complete and accurate health information and services. Women's ability to manage their own health care is at risk of being compromised by politics and ideology." This argument, however, seems a bit spurious in light of the fact that such information is readily available online and through a variety of other sources, including the sex education classes that children are subjected to in the public schools.

Pro-abortion groups also claimed that health workers may include "contraception" in the category of abortion, and opt out of providing contraceptives and information about contraceptives. When Leavitt was asked to clarify whether the plan included the various contraceptives, he declared, "There is nothing in this rule that would in any way change a patient's right to a legal procedure."



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