



ACLU Insists Catholic Groups Should Fund Illegals' Abortions

The American Civil Liberties Union is suing the federal government in an effort to force religious organizations to provide abortions and contraception to illegal immigrants. Fox News reports that the lawsuit seeks to obtain government records regarding the reproductive healthcare policies for illegal immigrant children that are currently in the care of federally funded Catholic groups. Depending on the content of those documents, the ACLU said it could take further legal action.



“We have heard reports that Catholic bishops are prohibiting Catholic charities from allowing teens in their care to access critical services like contraception and abortion — even if the teenager has been raped on her journey to the United States or in a detention facility,” said ACLU staff attorney Brigitte Amiri.

Amiri indicates that approximately 80 percent of the 60,000 unaccompanied illegal minors who crossed from the Mexican border last year were the victims of sexual assault.

Some of those children are currently under the care of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) under a contracted arrangement between the federal government and the USCCB, which has received over \$70 million from the government to provide the care.

The ACLU has targeted a letter by the USCCB wherein the group voices its opposition to a federal regulation that compels contractors to provide abortions to immigrant minors who have undergone sexual abuse. The letter [reads](#):

Catholic, evangelical and many other faith-based organizations are motivated to serve by their religious and moral convictions to protect human life, especially at its most vulnerable. This is why these faith-based organizations represent such a significant proportion of grantees serving the unaccompanied minor population.... Faith-based organizations also have a comparative advantage in garnering trust among newcomers to this country, including unaccompanied minors.... It is within this context that the federal government should recognize the importance of not discriminating against religious and other organizations with moral or religious convictions regarding the services provided to children.

According to the ACLU, the Catholic organizations are obliged to adhere to the regulation because they are accepting federal grants. “The Catholic Bishops are taking millions of dollars in federal grants — and then imposing their beliefs on this vulnerable population who they are supposed to serve ... and that raises serious concerns under the separation of church and state provision in our Constitution,” said Amiri.

But there is no separation of church and state provision in the Constitution. The phrase came from



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President Thomas Jefferson's 1802 [letter](#) to the Danbury Baptist Association, wherein he reiterated that under the First Amendment, Congress cannot establish a national religion. "I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church & State," Jefferson wrote.

Unfortunately, progressives have latched on to the rallying cry "separation of church and state" and have used it to bulldoze over Christians in courts and, with the help of groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the United Coalition of Reason, have been largely successful.

However, the way progressives have interpreted that phrase to justify intruding on the rights of Christians is entirely diametric to the point that Jefferson was making in his letter. Jefferson's letter continued by stating it was his job as president to ensure that the rights of the citizens to practice and adhere to their own religious beliefs would not be stifled: "Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties."

Ironically, that same letter to which the progressives owe their overused non-constitutional maxim to oppose any public show of spirituality concluded in a prayer, confirming once more the importance of reading in context.

USCCB contends that it should be continue to serve minors without having to betray its own belief system. "For decades, we have provided exemplary services to this vulnerable population without facilitating abortions, and despite ACLU's extreme assertions to the contrary, the law not only permits our doing so, but protects it," said Kevin Appleby, director of the USCCB's Office of Migration Policy and Public Affairs.

Appleby contends that the ACLU's actions will serve to disrupt the positive working relationship Catholic groups have maintained with the federal government. "Let's be clear about the ACLU's purpose here: ending the productive and successful partnership between the Catholic Church and the federal government on the care and shelter of vulnerable populations. Denying us the freedom to serve betrays the very children the ACLU is purportedly attempting to help," he told Fox News.



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