(3) causes the permanent impairment of the mental faculties of members of the group through drugs, torture, or similar techniques;

(4) subjects the group to conditions of life that are intended to cause the physical destruction of the group in whole or in part;

(5) imposes measures intended to prevent births within the group; or

(6) transfers by force children of the group to another group;

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND THE LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR CASE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CURBELO of Florida). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the topic of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, next week, the Supreme Court will hear the most important religious freedom case in decades. It is Zubik v. Burwell. The purpose of this Special Order is to talk a little bit about religious freedom and what is at stake here.

Before I begin, I yield to my colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), who has long been a champion of human rights across the globe and understands the importance of religious freedom and is also the chair of our Pro-Life Caucus.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. I want to thank my good friend and colleague, KEITH ROTHFUS, for his tremendous leadership on protecting the weakest and the most vulnerable among us, including the unborn and their mothers who are at risk of violence perpetrated by abortion, and for his dedication to protecting conscience rights, again, the subject of today's Special Order.

Next week, the Court will hear oral argument on a landmark case for religious liberty. The impact of the Court's ruling in this case cannot be overstated, but the question before the Court is really quite simple: Can the government coerce the Little Sisters of the Poor and other people of faith to violate their conscience?

The Obama administration is telling these religious sisters, women who have given their life in service to God by taking care of the elderly poor, that their conscience is irrelevant and that they must follow the Federal Government's conscience rather than their own.

This abuse of government power is absolutely antithetical to the American principle of freedom of religion and the First Amendment. Unless reversed, Obama's attack on conscience rights means that government can impose discrimination against Americans who seek to live according to their faith.

The Little Sisters have 30 homes for the elderly across the United States. Each Little Sister takes a vow of obedience to God and of hospitality ''to care for the aged as if they were Christ Himself,'' and they wear religious habits as a sign to others of God's presence in the world. Yet the Obama administration is dictating to the Little Sisters and others about how they should interpret their own religious beliefs. That, in a word, is outrageous.

□ 1330

The Sisters object to having their healthcare plans used to funnel drugs and devices that they have a moral objection to, including drugs that could even destroy a young human life. The sisters say that facilitating the provision of these items is a violation of their religious beliefs, and the government is saying: No, it isn't. We know better than you.

Under the Obama administration's coercive mandate, the Little Sisters and other religious organizations, like Priests for Life and Geneva College, are put in the impossible situation of being forced to violate their religious beliefs or face Obama-imposed crippling fines of $100 per day per employee. In the case of the Little Sisters, that would mean about $70 million per year.

This obscene penalty is completely unfair, unreasonable, and unconscionable. The Obama administration is saying: We will punish you; we will hurt you; we will stop you from serving, unless you provide health care according to the government's conscience, not your own.

President Obama has no business imposing his morality on people of faith, but that is exactly what this oppressive mandate does.

Let's make no mistake about it, this mandate is very much Obama's willful intention. The imposition of this attack on religious freedom is no accident. It comes straight from the pages of ObamaCare.

In December of 2009, in the run-up to passage of ObamaCare, Senator MIKULSKI offered an amendment which provided the authorizing language for this oppressive mandate; and some, including Senator CASEY, rigorously supported Senator MIKULSKI's amendment.

Mr. Speaker, when President Obama spoke in 2009 at Notre Dame University—which, I would say parenthetically, has also filed suit over the mandate—he spoke about drafting a sensible conscience clause. Yet today, protection of conscience is another highly visible broken promise of ObamaCare.

The Supreme Court, Mr. Speaker, has a duty to protect the right of the Little Sisters of the Poor and others to live according to their conscience, to ensure that they serve the elderly poor according to their conscience.

Again, I thank Mr. ROTHFUS for his leadership.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, again, for his long leadership on this very important subject of protecting life and protecting conscience.

He mentioned something about the government deciding what is or is not a sincerely held belief. It has been long established, Mr. Speaker, that that is up to the religious adherent-to-be, making that decision, not the government, not the government to interpose itself and tell an individual what is a sincerely held belief for the individual. That is a fundamental freedom that the individual has.

I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA), who also has concerns about what is at stake.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. ROTHFUS.

Also, I appreciate following somebody like the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), who has been a tremendous leader on life and on the individual liberties that we are guaranteed and that, indeed, were the cornerstones of the founding of this country and are our religious rights. So I am glad to be able to support Mr. ROTHFUS today in this Special Order about our First Amendment to the Constitution.

We know that next Wednesday, it appears the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments for the Little Sisters of the Poor in the consolidated cases of Zubik v. Burwell.

Now, why is it we are even having to do this? How far have we gotten out of touch, as a Nation and as this oppressive government, that we have to go to court to assert the religious rights and freedoms of individual organizations, like Little Sisters and others that are joining them? It is outrageous to me because, again, a cornerstone of the founding of this country is religious rights.

The Little Sisters of the Poor is a tremendous faith-based organization consisting of Catholic nuns who serve the elderly in over 30 countries around the world, giving from their hearts to help people in a way they see fit in their views and their religion with God.

My scheduler, Caitlin, hosts a weekly movie night at the Little Sisters D.C. home, where she and many others can attest to the incredible work that is done by these nuns.

The HHS mandate under ObamaCare is now forcing religious organizations, like the Little Sisters, to provide health care plans, contraceptives, drugs, and things that they find that are against their belief system, that violate their deeply held belief system system; yet the club of ObamaCare and this Federal Government, hitting them over the head saying ''you have to provide this,'' goes against our founding principles, and I think the whole country should be outraged by this, merely so that a few can have something provided to them for free by an organization that shouldn't have to be doing so.

Indeed, John Adams once stated: ''Nothing is more dreaded than the national government meddling with religion.'' It is a fundamental liberty critical to a thriving and free society.

We have been blessed in a free country, where we can have our expression free, not having to adhere to a healthcare mandate or being forced to bake a cake because of someone else's idea of violating religious views. It is not government's place to determine what a person's religion requires or adheres to. Our laws should support and encourage citizens to worship without fear of reprisal from an oppressive Federal Government.

I urge my colleagues to stand up for religious organizations, such as Little Sisters of the Poor, and protect them from this horrific HHS mandate. And for the Supreme Court, once they decide to weigh in on a decision, not just to have yet another partisan down-the-line decision based on politics but, indeed, look into their hearts and look into their souls to what is right for the founding principles of this Nation and for people like Little Sisters of the Poor to carry out their God-given and God-driven agenda to help the people of the world.

Mr. Speaker, I, again, thank Mr. ROTHFUS for the time and for leading this Special Order here today.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman LAMALFA for those observations and to hear about some personal interactions with the Little Sisters of the Poor and the tremendous work that they do.

We see the Little Sisters of the Poor at my parish about once a year. They are the most unthreatening individuals you would imagine. They stand at the door. Some of them are older, so it appears that some of them may have a little bit of arthritis as they are bent over holding a basket. And in that basket is a request for donations. They beg. They beg for people to support their work, which is caring for the most vulnerable people in our society, the elderly poor.

We haven't gotten here in a vacuum, Mr. Speaker. I think it is very important for us to take a look at the historical context of religious freedom and its importance.

Freedom of religion is fundamental in our country. An interesting note, here in my pocket is the Constitution, and religious freedom is literally the very first freedom mentioned in our Constitution. It is in the Bill of Rights.

''Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.''

The very first freedom mentioned.

After freedom of religion, there is freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of the right of the people to peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances. But the very first freedom mentioned is the freedom of religion.

It is interesting because we also talk about rights in our society. As a footnote, our founding documents—the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution—talk about rights. But the very first right in one of our founding documents is the right to life.

In our Declaration, ''We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.''

The very first right in our founding documents is the right to life, and the very first freedom in our founding documents is the freedom of religion.

Why was it so important? Because there is a long history, Mr. Speaker, of how religion has been treated throughout the world.

You can go back to the beginnings of the development of the Christian faith in Europe where we saw this religious sect begin in the Holy Land and then spread to the capital of the Roman Empire.

It was the Roman emperors who first persecuted the people of faith, who had the Christian faith. We saw how the emperors forced early Christians to violate their conscience.

It might not seem as any big deal. All they wanted was for individuals to burn a little pinch of incense before the Roman gods because the emperors were concerned about threats to the empire; and they thought if they could appease the Roman gods, if they had everybody in the empire doing that little pinch, it was not going to hurt anybody.

In fact, a lot of Christians went along with it. But there were those who did not because they could not do that in their conscience. And what happened to them? They were murdered. They were murdered because they did not burn that pinch of incense to the Roman gods.

So we look back through history and we understand now that it was wrong for an all-powerful government to go after people of conscience's sincerely held beliefs. We all recognize that as abhorrent right now.

But it wasn't just 2,000 years ago or 1,800 years ago, Mr. Speaker, that we saw these persecutions happening. There was a gentleman in 16th century England, in 1535. We know him now in history as ''a man for all seasons.'' Thomas More, an extraordinary intellect, was a poet, lawyer, father, husband, Speaker of the House of Commons, chancellor.

Mr. More was a man of serious faith and serious conscience. He had a very good relationship with his friend, King Henry VIII, but King Henry had a problem. He had made an arrangement to have special permission granted where he could marry the widow of his brother who had died, Catherine of Aragon.

But after some time, Henry was concerned that he did not have a male heir that he wanted to leave the throne to. So he thought he needed another wife.

We know the course of history: He divorced Catherine, and he married Anne Boleyn. He wanted the people of England to accept that. He knew that his dynasty was at stake, so he required people to accept that.

Thomas More, in conscience, could not. He was jailed in the Tower of London. His books were taken away. He refused to speak on the matter because he thought that silence would protect him. Then there was perjury, and he was convicted of treason for opposing the king, and he was beheaded, all because he was following the dictates of his conscience.

This was the context, Mr. Speaker, in which Western history was developing. And as the Renaissance was happening—and More was part of the English Renaissance—and as we went into the later 16th century and the 17th century, the development of thinking on religious freedom—and there were religious wars throughout Europe, and all these minorities seemed to be getting oppressed by the government—a number of sects decided that there would be a better place where they could practice their faith in conscience, and that place was the New World across the ocean.

□ 1345

It took a lot of trouble to get to the New World—dangerous new territory, treacherous crossing, unknowns—but these were people who were looking to build a city upon a hill. We know the stories of Pilgrims, who sought religious freedom, and of, later, the Puritans. My own State, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, was established as a colony where people of conscience would be protected.

William Penn, in his Pennsylvania Charter of Privileges in 1701, wrote:

''No people can be truly happy, though under the greatest enjoyments of civil liberties, if abridged of the freedom of their conscience as to their religious profession and worship.''

Penn, himself, was jailed for his exercising his conscience, as he wrote from Newgate Prison in 1670:

''By liberty of conscience, we understand not only a mere liberty of the mind but the exercise of ourselves in a visible way of worship, upon our believing it to be indispensably required at our hands, that if we neglect it for fear or favor of any mortal man, we sin and incur divine wrath.''

All of these individuals were seeking protection, were seeking a place where they could exercise their freedom of conscience. Maybe that, Mr. Speaker, is why the freedom of religion is the first freedom mentioned in our Bill of Rights.

Our Founders, the Fathers of our country, understood the importance of religion. President George Washington remarked in his farewell address that religion and morality are ''the firmest props of the duties of men and citizens'' and ''the indispensable supports of the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity.''

Six years prior to his farewell address, Washington wrote a letter to the

Hebrew Congregation in Newport, Rhode Island, which contained, arguably, one of the most beautiful articulations of religious liberty in American history:

''The citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given to mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal policy—a policy worthy of imitation. All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship. It is now no more that toleration is spoken of as if it were the indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights, for, happily, the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens in giving it on all occasions their effectual support.''

Alexis de Tocqueville, who visited this country in the 1830s, explains in ''Democracy in America,'' in looking back at the experience of the Pilgrims: The Pilgrims came, de Tocqueville said, ''to make an idea triumph.'' They founded a community, the Pilgrims, and a society where government could not encroach on their particular religious practice. This is part of the fabric of our country.

Look at the experience in history. All of the Founders were well-versed in our history, the Western history—of the importance of conscience, of religious freedom. Outside observers coming to this country, like de Tocqueville, were seeing it and understanding the importance of people of faith to correct the errors that were in our country. The movement to abolish the abominable practice of slavery happened because people of faith stood up and recognized the inherent indignity of the practice and the violation of fundamental human rights. History in our country is just replete with instances of people of faith who have stood up to make a difference. One hundred years after the end of the Civil War, it was people of faith who began the marches in the South. It was people of faith from the north who went down to help.

Dr. Martin Luther King was a pastor. He went to seminary in my home State of Pennsylvania, to the Crozer Theological Seminary. He was motivated by what was the fabric of his life, which was grounded in scripture. He asked the big questions.

Just before his death, Dr. King says:

''Conscience asks, 'Is it right?' And there comes a time when we must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but one must take it because it is right.''

People of faith, people of conscience, we have seen them very active in the effort to protect all human life since the Supreme Court, in 1973, took what then-Justice White said was an exercise in raw judicial power and said that certain human beings aren't persons.

We know that we have had more than 50 million abortions since that time, but it has been people of faith who have been looking for solutions, who have been seeking to help women in crisis. Whether it has been Catholic charities, crisis pregnancy centers, people of faith, they have been standing up and providing assistance to women in crisis, walking with them, helping to carry the burdens that they are experiencing—of women who have often been abandoned and isolated, who don't feel like they have a friend but then who find a hotline where a voice picks up—somebody who has been motivated by his faith to be sitting by that phone, wanting to help, asking to help.

Next week, the Supreme Court is going to be taking a look at this case. Again, it may be the most important religious freedom case the Court has heard. The Court is going to make the decision: For the individual who objects to signing a form based on his religious belief, is that a legitimate exercise of his conscience?

That is not the government's decision, Mr. Speaker. The government should not be subjectively telling an individual in this country, who has a fundamental First Amendment right—a first freedom—to exercise his religion, what is legitimate and what is not. That is what is at stake here.

It is interesting that my diocese—the diocese in which I live, the Diocese of Pittsburgh—is the lead plaintiff named in the case, Bishop Zubik.

Bishop Zubik has written:

''Religious freedom is not secondary freedom; it is the founding freedom. Religious freedom in this country means that we pledge allegiance to both God and country, not to God or country.

''We have the right not just to worship, not just to pray privately. We also have the right to try to have an impact on our society for the common good. We have our rights to express our beliefs publicly and try to convince hearts and minds. We not only have a duty but the right to live out the faith in our ministries of service.

''Religious freedom is not a passive act. Religious freedom is intentionally action. Religious freedom has to be expressed. Religious freedom has to be lived. Religious freedom has to be out in the open, among the people. Freedom of religion can never be confined to merely the freedom to worship. It defies the Constitution and does a mortal injustice to society.''

The First Amendment doesn't say ''freedom to worship.'' It says ''freedom of religion.''

For those who are Christians, you can go to Matthew, chapter 25, and the mandates that we have from Jesus.

Looking at whether in your life you fed the poor, clothed the naked, gave drink to the thirsty, visited those in prison, when you go up to the pearly gates, those who have lived in accordance with Matthew 25 may still ask the question: When did I help you? When?

''When you did it to the least of my brothers, you did it to me.''

That is not happening inside the church, Mr. Speaker. That is happening on the streets. It is happening in hospitals. It is happening in health clinics. It is happening in food banks. It is happening on counseling hotlines. These are people of faith who are engaged in public society, who want to help others. In a spirit of solidarity, they are standing with those who are suffering, and they are wanting to help—motivated by their faith.

That is what the Little Sisters of the Poor do. I mentioned how the Little Sisters come to my parish and beg. They are not a very threatening bunch, Mr. Speaker. They have homes across the country in which they are taking care of the elderly. They offer an opportunity for dignity for the people who have lived long and hard lives. At the end of their lives, they may not have much to show for it from a monetary perspective, but they may have lived very rich lives in the way they were helping in their communities. That is not a condition for going to stay with the Little Sisters of the Poor. They love unconditionally and they provide a chance for people in their senior years to have a little bit of respect and a little bit of dignity.

The Little Sisters of the Poor are up against a leviathan—Goliath—the all-powerful United States Federal Government at the Department of Health and Human Services.

It says, ''You will sign this. You, Sister, will sign this.''

''But,'' Sister says in her conscience, ''I can't do that.''

''Sister, it is an opt-out.''

Sister is saying, ''Yes, but if I sign that document, that sets in chain the provisions of services that violate my conscience. You are forcing me to take an act to be the cause—the cause of something I don't believe in.''

''But, Sister, you will. You will do this.''

Think back 2,000 years, 1,800 years. The Empire needs to be protected from barbarians who are going to be coming across—the Goths, whoever it is. We have to sacrifice just a pinch—just a pinch—to our Roman gods to be protected.

Thomas More: King Henry's surrogates go to Thomas in the tower. ''Just sign the document. Just sign the document. It is not going to hurt. It will bring peace. It will make sure that the king's dynasty will continue. We are tired of religious wars in Europe, and if the king doesn't have a male heir, then we are going to have all kinds of continued wars. There is a very good justification, Sir Thomas, to sign that document.''

Thomas says, ''I can't. I can't.'' He lost his head.

People of faith in England and in Holland—wherever—knew that if they got to these shores, they could live in freedom of conscience.

□ 1400

Now we have the all-powerful government coming in and saying: You will

comply; you will sign. Oh, Sister, that is not a violation of your religious freedom. Trust us.

Really? Really? How is it that the Federal Government could be the arbiter of what is a sincerely held belief? Doesn't that set the government up perhaps as an entity itself making religious decisions?

I thought the Federal Government was not supposed to make religious decisions. If the Federal Government has a bureau of what is a sincerely held religious belief, that is a pretty serious issue that the Court needs to take a look at.

I wonder what you would call that bureau? Bureau of legitimate religious practices? Bureau of legitimate religious beliefs? Bureau of what we will allow you to believe in this country? Is that what this is?

It is obvious, Mr. Speaker, that religious freedom is not a priority here for those who promulgate these regulations.

I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BENISHEK), who is a stalwart defender of human life.

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative ROTHFUS for setting up this time so we can draw attention to this case of the Little Sisters of the Poor and for his eloquent defense of the right to life.

I am here today to also support the Little Sisters of the Poor and all the faith-based groups in our country that seek to help the poor and unfortunate among us.

Northern Michigan, where I come from, is home to many of these organizations, and I am very familiar with the good works that these groups do in our communities. We need to be doing more to encourage this type of service and make faith-based organizations even more important in our country, not put undue problems in their way and make them do things that they don't believe in.

The undue burden that is being imposed on many of these organizations by the Federal Government is completely wrong. Thanks to the President's healthcare law, faith-based organizations are being forced to participate in a convoluted system that leads to abortion, a practice that is contrary to their and my deeply held beliefs.

I stand with the Little Sisters of the Poor and many of my constituents in northern Michigan in the belief that life inside the womb is just as precious as life outside the womb. Both unborn and born children have a right to life, and we have a duty to defend this right. This is a civil right. This is what our country was founded upon. Life is the first of the freedoms that are enumerated.

My hope is that Americans who believe in the sanctity of life will keep strong in their efforts to stop the Federal Government's intrusion into our religious freedom.

I, myself, am frankly amazed that we live in a country that was founded on the right to life and liberty—and we all have heard the phrase ''life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness''—and that the Federal Government is paying for losing a civil right: the right to life.

I don't know what it is exactly, how this country that is founded on principles like that could have gotten to this state. It is one of the reasons I am standing here. I never was involved with politics in my life until this administration came upon the scene and started destroying the fabric of our Republic.

I think often, too: How does this happen? How does God allow this to happen? This time in our lives, in our country, is truly a test of our faith.

Really, Mr. Speaker, I am here to be sure that all Americans continue to fight and not lose the hope that our country will solve this problem and get out of the business of paying for abortions and the tragedy of abortion over the many years that it has been legal in this country. I call upon those Americans to continue to work hard, to keep strong in their efforts, to bring an end to this tragedy that is going on in America and the overreaching Federal Government that is allowing it to happen.

I again commend Mr. ROTHFUS for doing this and really call out to all Americans to not lose hope that we are going to put a stop to this and to continue to fight for the lives of the unborn and unfortunate.

I again applaud those faith-based organizations that continue to fight and go to court over this and that we need to continue to do this.

I thank the gentleman for the opportunity to speak.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. BENISHEK.

Again, you think about the dignity of the human person and, as he talked about, the importance of the right to life, just a fundamental right.

Again, as I mentioned earlier, the first right in our founding documents, beginning with the first freedom being the freedom of religion.

It is amazing to me how the freedom of religion in this country has informed the world and what took root in this country 240 years ago, which is the notion that we were not going to have an established church and that we were going to allow people to freely exercise their faith and how that has led to this proliferation in our country of the practice of faith. And comparing what is happening in the United States versus other countries, particularly in Europe where there was an established church, we know that more people go to church in this country than in Europe.

It was the American experience, I think, that has really informed others, including the Catholic church, of which I am a member. I hark back to what President Washington had written to the Hebrew congregation:

''The citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal policy: a policy worthy of imitation. All possess, alike, liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship.''

It is amazing to look at that letter and then to reflect how the Catholic church came together under, now, Pope Saint John XXIII with the Second Vatican Council, which the whole idea was to open up the church and to engage modernity and to see what was out there that might inform how people are ordering their lives.

The Second Vatican Council issued a number of remarkable documents, including a declaration on religious freedom, the Dignitatis Humanae. It states:

''The exercise of religion, of its very nature, consists before all else in those internal, voluntary and free acts whereby man sets the course of his life directly toward God. No merely human power can either command or prohibit acts of this kind.''

The Second Vatican Council, they had to recognize how religious freedom developed in this country because there was no coercion. Conversely, there is the long history going back hundreds of years, centuries, back to the Roman martyrs where the emperor was forcing people to act against their conscience, King Henry VIII.

Here we have, today, an all-powerful Federal Government sitting in judgment on what somebody's sincerely held belief is. The Court needs to protect this fundamental freedom. The Court needs to protect conscience. This country is a better place because of it.

It is interesting because, as the Affordable Care Act has been implemented, the purported compelling interests that the government uses about providing access to health care, they have set up a regime, a scheme where not every single plan is being required to provide the services that the Little Sisters of the Poor find objectionable or that the Diocese of Pittsburgh would find objectionable or Geneva College, a Christian college in my district, would find objectionable, because they grandfathered some plans. They grandfathered plans that cover millions of people.

So I guess it is a compelling interest when they are going after a little religious charity, but it is not a compelling interest if they are going against a big corporation that might have a grandfathered plan.

Oh, it is just signing a little paper, Sister.

No, it is not; it is coercion.

If the Little Sisters of the Poor are providing health insurance to their employees without the mandated services that include abortion-causing drugs, if they provide a health plan that covers cancer, covers maternity benefits, covers a broken bone at the emergency room, but doesn't cover those services they find objectionable, they will be fined $36,500 a year for one person. All told, when you add it all up, it is $70

million. But if they provide no plan—no plan at all—it is $2,000 per employee. If that doesn't send a message of coercion, I don't know what does.

I urge the Court to recognize the right of conscience and to be tolerant of that. This country is a wonderful country. ''Tolerance'' is one of the words that we have inscribed down here on the rostrum of the House of Representatives—''tolerance.''

It is a two-way street, Mr. Speaker, and I would urge the folks at the Department of Health and Human Services to give a better appreciation for tolerance.

This country just has a long history of protecting religious freedom from the very beginning through the movement to abolish slavery, through the movement to ask for the cashing of the promissory note that Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King talked about, to the pro-life movement, to the charities, the hospitals, the clinics, the schools, and the food banks that have all been run by religious organizations. It is about these organizations wanting to take care of people.

Although not a party to the case, I think of a story involving the Missionaries of Charity, that order founded by blessed Teresa of Calcutta, who will be canonized a Catholic saint this September by Pope Francis, who spoke here in this Chamber.

Mother Teresa's nuns have established a number of homes around the world. We know that they had a home for the elderly in Yemen, and some of those residents were murdered just weeks ago by radical jihadists. Four of the sisters were murdered as well.

Mother Teresa has established homes in our country, and I remember hearing a story about a home in San Francisco in either the late 1980s or early 1990s. It was a home that was caring for people with AIDS. There was a story of one gentleman who was going to die, and he needed a place to stay.

□ 1415

The Missionaries of Charity took him in, and they nursed him back to health. He went back out and continued his life, but he got sick again and came back again. The sisters welcomed him back.

As he neared the end of his life, he was scared until Mother Teresa picked him up in her arms. For once in his life, he found unconditional love and peace because a person of faith whom we all recognize did great things because of faith, that person found peace.

Millions of people in this country have found peace because of the free exercise of religion. Let's not crush that. Let's protect these fundamental freedoms of religious freedom, the tremendous good that is being done. We should not make religious organizations adjuncts of the all-powerful Federal Government: You can practice your charity as long as you do it the way we want you to. We lose something there, Mr. Speaker.

How much time do I have remaining, Mr. Speaker?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BABIN). The gentleman from Pennsylvania has 11 minutes remaining.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I am going to yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT), who has long been an advocate for the types of freedoms I have been talking about, religious freedom, and the first right that we have been talking about, the right to life.

I yield to Mr. GOHMERT.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I am so grateful to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS), my friend. I mean, just within days of Mr. ROTHFUS arriving here at the Capitol as a United States Congressman, we were together, abiding together, standing together, and it has been my great honor to do so. I have come to know his heart. He is a man of intellect, a man of character.

Mr. ROTHFUS. So the gentleman from Texas will control the time, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to join my colleagues in support of fundamental American values, among which are commitments to religious freedom, human rights, and religious expression.

As a Catholic, my faith plays a significant role in every aspect of my life and fosters a respect for the religious rights and freedoms of others.

Next week, the Supreme Court will hear from our religious non-profit organizations, including the Little Sisters of the Poor, which have challenged the HHS mandate and its impact on their religious rights and freedoms.

I believe in the importance of patient-centered health care for women, and I also want to ensure that conscience rights and religious liberties are protected.

At its core, this case is about the state forcing religious organizations to provide for services that violate their beliefs.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, to hear my friend Mr. ROTHFUS talk about the Little Sisters of the Poor—I have not met them personally as he has. I don't know them personally as he does, but it is rather clear they bear a great deal of resemblance in the way they carry themselves, in the way they help others, in the way they are incredibly selfless, that they are living their lives truly committed to doing what Jesus said when he said: If you love me, you will tend my sheep.

These Little Sisters of the Poor, these Catholic nuns, since I haven't met them personally and dealt with them personally, as the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS), my friend, has, I take it from his description and from what I have seen of them on television and heard them speak on radio and television and in the written media, these are precious, extraordinary women, the kind of people about which Jesus spoke when he said: They will inherit the Earth.

Unfortunately, between that time when they inherit all things, they have to endure the slings and arrows of people who ridicule and persecute Christians for their beliefs. It is so remarkable that we are supposed to have this incredibly educated judiciary, this incredibly educated group of people in the United States, when, as I have heard repeatedly in my district over the last few months, you know, there is sense, s-e-n-s-e, in Washington and at the Capitol, but it's not common sense there.

It is common sense where the Little Sisters of the Poor are located. It is common sense where I live in Texas, common sense among the 12 counties that I travel constantly. There are places around the country it is common sense, but not here, because the people around the country can read the First Amendment to our Constitution. It says Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

This is a Nation, according to our Founders, who had a tremendous amount to say about our foundation. I know that we have had people educated to the level of Ph.D.—perhaps even beyond, whatever that is—and yet they have not gotten a complete education of the basis on which this Nation was founded. They have been convinced by people who have taken tiny little parts of our founding and seen little trees and shrubs and ignored the forest.

If people on the Supreme Court and in our Federal court system would dare to look at a full history of this Nation, they might actually read what the Pilgrims themselves said in their own writing, their own agreement, because in 1620, November 11, 1620—I am quoting from the Pilgrims:

''In the name of God, Amen . . . having undertaken, for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith, and honor of our king and country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one of another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politick.''

Or how about September 26, 1642, some educational institution called Harvard that has also been educating people out of common sense. Thank God there are people who have graduated from Harvard and have been able to maintain some level of common sense. But Harvard said:

''Let every student be plainly instructed and earnestly pressed to consider well the main end of his life and studies is to know God and Jesus Christ, which is eternal life (John 17:3) and therefore to lay Christ in the bottom as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning. And seeing the Lord only giveth wisdom, let every