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News and resources from the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty



## Free to Serve USCCB Religious Liberty News *"We are Catholics, We are Americans"*

April 2016

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### New and Notable

#### **The Little Sisters of the Poor Tell the Supreme Court: There is a solution**

Less than a week after the Supreme Court heard the case of the Little Sisters of the Poor (*Zubik v. Burwell*), the Court made an unprecedented move asking both sides to provide additional arguments about whether the government could find ways to distribute contraceptives without the involvement of religious non-profits and their health plans. The Court had also asked whether, for non-profits who buy traditional insurance plans, the government might hire the same insurance company to provide the drugs. [On April 12, 2016, the religious non-profits told the Supreme Court: "The answer to that question is clear and simple: Yes."](#)

In a follow-up press call regarding the briefs filed with the U.S. Supreme Court in the Little Sisters of the Poor case, the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty questions the government for failing to acknowledge the contraceptive-only plans that already exist through Medicaid. [In the briefs filed April 20, 2016](#), the Little Sisters of the Poor and the government responded further to the Supreme Court's question of whether there are alternatives to the mandate for religious non-profit ministries. [The ministries have continued to respond loud and clear:](#)

["Yes."](#)

### **Interview with Archbishop William Lori**

Archbishop Lori spoke talks with Crux about the Ad Hoc Committee's [newest video](#), the Little Sisters case, and perceptions that the bishops' religious freedom efforts have driven them into a de facto alliance with the political right. [Check it out!](#)

### **Cardinal Dolan And Archbishop Lori Urge Congress To Support The Conscience Protection Act Of 2016**

The Conscience Protection Act (H.R. 4828, previously called the Abortion Non-Discrimination Act) will address the deficiencies that block effective enforcement of existing laws, most notably by establishing a private right of action allowing victims of discrimination to defend their own rights in court. [Read more...](#)

### **26 Organizations Urge Congress to Pass Conscience Protection Act Of 2016**

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) joined twenty-five other major pro-life, religious, and health care organizations on April 19 urging the U.S. House of Representatives to pass the Conscience Protection Act of 2016 (H.R. 4828). Signatories include ten medical groups representing tens of thousands of health care professionals who object to abortion and are seeking legal protection to serve their patients in good conscience. [Read more...](#)

### **USCCB Files Amicus Brief in *Trinity Lutheran Church v. Pauley***

On April 21, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the Missouri Catholic Conference, and other Catholic and non-Catholic organizations filed an amicus brief in the U.S. Supreme Court in a case entitled *Trinity Lutheran Church v. Pauley*. The case involves a Free Exercise Clause challenge to a decision by the State of Missouri denying a grant for playground resurfacing to an otherwise eligible religious school solely because of its religious affiliation. [Read more...](#)

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## **New Video**

### **The Right to Religious Freedom**



The Little Sisters of the Poor face a dire threat to their religious freedom in the United States. [Find out more](#) about what the Catholic Church teaches on religious freedom, including the groundbreaking Declaration on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis Humanae*) from the Second Vatican Council.

Let's Talk! Small community gatherings are a great, simple way to build the life of our Church. They are also important for a healthy civil society. [Here are some ideas for using the new video to kick start a small-group conversation about religious freedom.](#)

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## Polite Persecution

By Aaron Matthew Weldon

In a recent homily, [Pope Francis reminded Catholics that there are two kinds of persecution](#). There is the persecution that the early Church famously faced in the Roman Empire, and which Christians in places like Nigeria, Egypt, and Pakistan continue to face today. But Pope Francis names another kind of persecution: "polite persecution." This is the social marginalization of Christians who dissent from the direction in which secular society is moving. Polite persecution has been on full display in recent weeks here in the United States. [Read more...](#)

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*Non datur libertas sine veritate.*

