

September 11, 2012

The Honorable ***Name***
United States Senate
Name Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator ***Name***:

The Old Dominion Association of Church Schools urges you to support the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (S. 2043). In light of the troubling preventive services mandate stemming from implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, we strongly support this critical piece of legislation that would protect the religious liberty and conscience rights of our members.

Despite the one year implementation delay and the promise of a future accommodation by the Administration, ODACS has serious concerns about the effect of the mandate on the religious liberty of our church schools and on other faith-based organizations. Through the mandate, which remains published in the Federal Register unchanged, the government is dictating to religious organizations how they must operate in matters of conscience, regardless of the teaching of that faith. If enacted, the Health and Human Services contraceptive mandate could set a dangerous precedent that would infringe on the autonomy and religious liberty of our churches and schools. Since the majority of our church schools provide health insurance plans to their employees, the preventive services mandate would directly affect their ability to provide this service in good conscience. Hypothetical accommodations and implementation delays do not allay our concerns about the fundamental issue of religious liberty, nor does the extremely narrow religious exemption included in the preventive services mandate.

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which has broad bipartisan support, would amend the health care law “to provide conscience protections for individuals and organizations.” If passed, this bill would allow our schools to continue to provide this valuable service to their employees without violating their deeply held religious and moral beliefs.

We urge you to support the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and uphold the religious liberty that is granted us through the U.S. Constitution. May God bless you in your service to our country and to our great nation.

Sincerely,

Your Name
Title, Ministry