



Supreme Court to Hear Challenge to No-Cost Birth Control Benefit, including Claim that Emergency Contraception Is an Abortifacient

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Statement by Jessica Arons, President & CEO of the Reproductive Health Technologies Project on the Supreme Court granting certiorari in the cases of Sebelius v. Hobby Lobby Stores and Conestoga Wood Specialties v. Sebelius:

“We oppose any effort to increase roadblocks to a woman obtaining safe, effective, and affordable contraception. Decisions about whether and how to prevent or plan for pregnancy should be left to each woman and those whom she chooses to consult. And public policy should be informed by scientific and medical evidence, not ideological or political agendas.

“Employers should not be able to use religion as an excuse to discriminate against women, who almost universally rely on birth control as an important preventive health service. Not only do the plaintiffs in 40-plus lawsuits claim that for-profit corporations are entitled to religious protections, many also allege that the Plan B One-Step® emergency contraceptive pill should be considered to be an abortifacient.

“Such claims should be dismissed out of hand. The medical community defines pregnancy as beginning with the implantation of a fertilized egg. All of the FDA-approved contraceptive drugs and devices that must be covered with no cost-sharing under the Affordable Care Act do nothing to disrupt an established pregnancy – which is exactly why they are classified as contraceptives.

“Moreover, Plan B One-Step® and other levonorgestrel-based emergency contraceptive pills function by preventing ovulation, not by interfering with the implantation of a fertilized egg, as was just recognized earlier this month in a label update for NorLevo®, the European equivalent of Plan B One-Step®. Therefore, even for those who assert that pregnancy begins with the fertilization of an egg, Plan B One-Step® does not induce abortion.

“The individuals who run the corporate entities that seek to deny birth control coverage to their employees are entitled to their own religious beliefs, but not to their own facts.”
