

Joint Statement Regarding District of Columbia Reproductive Health Non-Discrimination Amendment Act

The undersigned are pro-life employers in the District of Columbia.

We thank those Members of Congress who supported H.J. Res. 43, which would have prevented the “Reproductive Health Non-Discrimination Amendment Act” from going into effect. That the House of Representatives took the extraordinary step of formally disapproving this bill demonstrates just how unprecedented and illegal RHNDA is. We will continue to resist, and encourage Congress to address, the District’s egregious violation of the First Amendment and federal law.

RHNDA prohibits employers in the District, including nonsectarian pro-life and religious organizations, from “discriminating” on the basis of “decisions” reached by employees related to “reproductive health” matters, including the taking of innocent human life by abortion. The bill’s proponents never identified a single actual local example of the hypotheticals they used to justify this law to the public. RHNDA’s true purpose is not to solve any real problem but to attack the many pro-life and religious organizations that make D.C. their home.

RHNDA is aimed squarely at the freedom of our organizations to draw our workforces from among those who share our foundational commitment to the sanctity of human life. The District Council has utterly failed to demonstrate why our organizations must be punished for hiring employees who can effectively advance our organizational missions through both their words and deeds.

RHNDA is also aimed squarely at our freedom to purchase and provide employee health plans that comport with our pro-life beliefs. The very purpose of this bill as expressed by its sponsor at the first hearing last June was to require religious employers to provide insurance coverage of all “reproductive health” decisions to their employees, including abortion. The District now claims to have abandoned this purpose. But despite its promises, the District has only temporarily suspended its pursuit of this objective through RHNDA. We will hold the District to its promise to permanently abandon this goal through further legislation.

We are nonsectarian pro-life organizations and religious ministries that make the nation’s capital our home. Despite the enactment of this unjust law, we will continue to hire employees who share our commitment to the dignity of every member of the human family. We will not abandon the purpose of our organizations in order to comply with this illegal and unjust law. We will vigorously resist any effort under RHNDA to violate our constitutionally protected fundamental rights.

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