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2026 Policy Agenda for Life and Religious Freedom in Health Care

The Christ Medicus Foundation and the Catholic Health Care Leadership Alliance are issuing our 2nd annual policy agenda to uphold the life, human dignity, health and wellbeing of all Americans in our nation's health care system. Our country can safeguard the life, health, and dignity of the most vulnerable Americans – from the unborn to the poor, from immigrants to the underserved in rural and urban areas - only if we legally protect the right to life and the right of religious freedom in health care.

To empower a flourishing American society, our country must advance health care policies, standards of care, and bioethics that robustly respect the rights to life, conscience, and religious freedom for patients, consumers, health care professionals, and health care entities. The rights to life, conscience, and religious freedom are the foundational rights upon which all human and civil rights depend. The exercise of conscience and religious faith in medical care is vital to improving health outcomes, longevity, and overall wellbeing for the American people.

This policy agenda's objective is to educate citizens and policy makers about: (a) the urgent need to protect life and religious freedom and (b) to accelerate the participation of pro-life and religious-based health care professionals and health care institutions in the United States.

The 2026 Policy Agenda for Life and Religious Freedom in Health Care

- 1) Permanently Defunding Abortion Providers:** Congress should pass legislation permanently prohibiting any abortion provider, including Planned Parenthood, from receiving federal funding. The executive branch of the federal government should conduct maximum enforcement of the One Big Beautiful Bill's one year prohibition on funding of abortion providers, to the fullest extent of the law.
- 2) Unborn Children and Pregnant Mothers Health Fund ('Healthy Families Fund'):** Congress should pass legislation creating a temporary 2 year multi-billion fund to expand medical care for unborn children and pregnant mothers. This healthy families fund would provide project-based grants to life-affirming pregnancy centers, pro-life medical clinics, and other life-affirming health care entities – from health systems to specialty practices – to provide medical care to pregnant mothers, unborn children, and infants. Consistent with the principles of the Hyde Amendment, this fund would be restricted to financially supporting only those pregnancy centers and health care entities that actively protect unborn life. The fund would be prohibited from awarding grants to abortion providers.

- 3) **Restricting Chemical Abortion Pills:** The Presidential Administration should take new executive action to protect pregnant women from chemical abortion pills because these products have been proven to be unethical and unsafe for both unborn children and women. Such executive action should direct the FDA to adopt appropriate safety protocols to warn women of the serious dangers that chemical abortion products pose to women's health. Additionally, because of the harmful effects of chemical abortion pills, the FDA should announce a new regulatory framework that regulates chemical abortion products commensurate with the threat those products pose to health and safety.

- 4) **Advancing Restorative Reproductive Medicine as an Ethical Alternative to Unethical In Vitro Fertilization:** In Vitro Fertilization is killing an untold number of unborn children. Furthermore, IVF exploits, commercializes, and objectifies both women and unborn children. Regardless of the grave moral concerns about IVF, the IVF process often fails and traumatizes the very people who procure this method. Meanwhile, families across the country continue to struggle with infertility and rightly desire the gift of parenthood. The Presidential Administration and Congress should take action to restrict and regulate IVF. Couples have an important interest in ethically conceiving children. To support these couples, the Administration and Congress should enact regulatory, funding, and legislative measures to promote and expand the utilization of Restorative Reproductive Medicine. Restorative Reproductive Medicine is an ethical life-affirming approach that treats the underlying causes of infertility and helps couples to naturally conceive children.

- 5) **Strengthening Medical Conscience Rights:** The current Presidential Administration has demonstrated strong support and enforcement of conscience and religious freedom rights. The Administration should build on this strong record through a national medical conscience rights education and regulatory initiative. Through education and new verification procedures to ensure compliance with federal conscience laws, this HHS national medical conscience rights initiative would bolster conscience and religious freedom rights within the American medical culture (with an opportunity to create lasting change in the practice of medicine). Specifically, this initiative would educate and seek to significantly improve compliance with the Church Amendments, the Weldon Amendment, the Coates-Snowe Amendment, and other federal medical conscience and religious freedom laws. In addition to these executive branch actions, Congress should pass the Conscience Protection Act or another legislative vehicle that would enact a private right of action for health professionals to file a lawsuit in federal court if their conscience or religious freedom rights are violated.

- 6) **Fairness for Pro-Life and Religious Health Care Providers:** The Presidential Administration would achieve a potentially historic advancement in religious freedom by issuing an executive order on religious liberty in health care. This executive order should seek to achieve equal opportunity and fairness for pro-life and religious health care professionals and health care entities. This executive order would direct the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Labor Department to take all appropriate regulatory actions, including updated guidance and legal findings, to empower pro-life and religious health care professionals and health care entities to participate in the American health care market. This executive order

would seek to stop health insurers from discriminating against pro-life or religious health care entities including in contracts and reimbursement arrangements. This executive order would also work to stop discrimination against pro-life and religious students studying in health care fields, including but not limited to medical schools, nursing programs, and mental health programs. Congress should likewise pass legislation to increase the participation of religious health care entities in the health care space, end religious discrimination, and incentive religious Americans to enter the health care field.

- 7) Combatting Euthanasia by Expanding Health Care Civil Rights Protections:** The HHS' Office for Civil Rights should issue a new health care civil rights regulation to combat active and passive euthanasia. Patients with disabilities, who are elderly, who are organ donors, in hospice, or who are suffering from life threatening conditions are susceptible to discrimination, denial of legitimate medical care, overmedication, and other actions that may hasten their death. HHS should conduct new regulatory actions and guidance, pursuant to existing federal civil rights laws (including but not limited to the federal Rehabilitation Act) to protect vulnerable patients and to strengthen civil rights protections and enforcement.
- 8) Providing Affordable Life Affirming Health Care to American Families:** Congress should pass legislation to provide direct monetary support for vulnerable Americans to purchase their own health care plan. This legislation would boost health care affordability for people who are unemployed, uninsured, or who have a lower income. The prospective new law would be limited to the purchase of health care plans that are life-affirming and thus do not provide coverage for abortions and other anti-life procedures.
- 9) Providing a Life-Affirming Social Safety Net for the Underserved and Vulnerable:** The Administration and Congress should take action to restore the health care safety net. These actions to restore the safety net should include regulatory and market innovations that enable faith-based and community health systems, excellent secular health systems, state and local institutions to provide quality life-affirming and dignified care. Importantly, such action will require Congress and HHS to ensure that health systems, especially in underserved communities, have adequate federal funding to care for the most vulnerable.

The [Christ Medicus Foundation](#) shares Jesus Christ's healing love in health and wellness. We advance religious freedom for medical professionals and patients. We promote Christ-centered pro-life medical care. We offer our [CURO Catholic health and wellness program](#) for the medical needs and whole-person wellness of individuals and families. The Christ Medicus Foundation works to accomplish its mission through education on health care policy, supporting Christ-centered pro-life medical care, and providing Catholic pro-life health and wellness programs.

[The Catholic Health Care Leadership Alliance](#) is an alliance of faithful Catholic organizations that supports the rights of patients and professionals to receive and provide health care in accordance with the moral, ethical, and social teachings of Jesus Christ and His Church through ongoing evangelization, education, advocacy, and mutual support.