

Women Speak FOR THEMSELVES

OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT OBAMA, SECRETARY SEBELIUS AND
MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

DON'T CLAIM TO SPEAK FOR ALL WOMEN

We are women who support the competing voice offered by Catholic institutions on matters of sex, marriage and family life. Most of us are Catholic, but some are not. We are Democrats, Republicans and Independents. Many, at some point in our careers, have worked for a Catholic institution. We are proud to have been part of the religious mission of that school, or hospital, or social service organization. We are proud to have been associated not only with the work Catholic institutions perform in the community – particularly for the most vulnerable -- but also with the shared sense of purpose found among colleagues who chose their job because, in a religious institution, a job is always also a vocation.

Those currently invoking "women's health" in an attempt to shout down anyone who disagrees with forcing religious institutions or individuals to violate deeply held beliefs are more than a little mistaken, and more than a little dishonest. Even setting aside their simplistic equation of "costless" birth control with "equality," note that they have never responded to the large body of scholarly research indicating that many forms of contraception have serious side effects, or that some forms act at some times to destroy embryos, or that government contraceptive programs inevitably change the sex, dating and marriage markets in ways that lead to more empty sex, more non-marital births and more abortions. It is women who suffer disproportionately when these things happen.

No one speaks for all women on these issues. Those who purport to do so are simply attempting to deflect attention from the serious religious liberty issues currently at stake. Each of us, Catholic or not, is proud to stand with the Catholic Church and its rich, life-affirming teachings on sex, marriage and family life. We call on President Obama and our Representatives in Congress to allow religious institutions and individuals to continue to witness to their faiths in all their fullness.