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- Home
- The Corner
- The Agenda
- The Campaign Spot
- Home Front
- Right Field
- Bench Memos
- Media Blog
- Feed
- Planet Gore
- Events
- Audio, Video & Galleries
- Kudlow
- Pryce-Jones
- Phi Beta Cons
- Postmodern Conservative
- Human Exceptionalism
- Tweet Tracker
- Log In
- Register
- ARTICLES
- AUTHORS
- RSS
- STORE
- DONATE
- MEDIA KIT
- MAGAZINE HELP
- CONTACT
- NR INSTITUTE



Eliana Johnson - Meet Mitzi Bickers



Jonah Goldberg - Elizabeth Warren: The Obama of 2016



Jay Nordlinger - No night at the opera, &c.



Kevin D. Williamson - The Eternal Dictator

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JANUARY 10, 2014 12:00 AM

Obama's War on Poor Nuns

He unjustly forces his birth-control mandate on the penniless caregivers of the elderly.

By Deroy Murdock

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A member of the Little Sisters of the Poor tends to a patient.

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Unfortunately, Americans debate Obama's contraceptive-fueled War on the Little Sisters of the Poor almost purely on religious-liberty grounds.

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While freedom of worship is a cornerstone of the American way, invoking religious freedom tends to electrify conservatives more than liberals.



Deroy Murdock

Thus, this case also should be discussed in terms that energize the Left: The Little Sisters clutch the short end of the income-inequality stick. There is no economic justice in their abuse by Obama, heartless bureaucrats, and the dapper despots at Eric Holder's Justice Department.

This is a genuine example of the haves hammering the have-nots.

Literally.

"The Little Sisters do their work for free," says Daniel Blomberg, legal counsel at the [Becket](#) Fund for Religious Liberty, which represents these nuns. "They are not paid salaries," Blomberg adds. "Each Little Sister takes a [vow](#) of poverty. They don't personally own anything."

Rather than concentrate fully on the destitute senior citizens whom they have served since 1888, the Little Sisters are distracted by Team Obama's insistence that they [genuflect](#) before Obamacare's mandate to provide free contraceptives to all fertile women, *regardless of income*. As serious Catholics, the sisters oppose birth control, especially in their own health plan.

If they resist, Obama would slam the sisters with crippling fines of \$100 per day per employee. This totals \$36,500 annually, each. With 60 workers, for instance, the Little Sisters of Denver could be fined \$2.2 million per annum — one third of their budget — unless they permitted Christian Brothers Services to cover contraceptives for these staffers.

"If the Little Sisters pay these fines, that money would not go to help elderly people who are dying and can't care for themselves," Blomberg adds. "Instead, these funds would go to the IRS."

Blomberg also notes that Obamacare lets HIV medication prices increase. "There are no restrictions on co-pays for HIV drugs. Indeed, plans do not have to cover them. But contraceptives must be covered and totally free," Blomberg says. "You can die under the Affordable Care Act because you cannot afford your HIV medications, but birth control has to be gratis."

This outrageous policy assumes that women should get contraceptives for nothing, even when they can afford them, as most women did until Obama decided to give them away, like perfume samples. As Sarah Kliff [wrote](#) in last December 11's *Washington Post*, "The percent of women paying nothing for birth control grew from 15 percent in fall 2012 up to 40 percent in spring 2013." Even worse, Obama insists that the cost of these freebies should be borne, at least partially, by people who believe, wrongly or rightly, that contraception is evil.

The poster girl for this crusade is Sandra Fluke, the feminist attorney who



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Today's Policy Agenda: Do Consumers Pay Attention to Health-Care Choices?

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screamed for free birth control in 2012, while studying law at Georgetown University. If Fluke earns the median private-sector starting salary for that school's graduates, Obama should explain why nuns who earn \$0.00 annually should face millions in fines unless they accept a scheme that lets a woman who makes \$160,000 enjoy birth control for \$0.00.

This is uglier than a gargoyle.

"Women at all income levels use the pill," says Dr. Lawrence B. Finer, director of domestic research at the Guttmacher Institute. "But pill use is more common among higher-income women than among lower-income women." Birth-control pills are the most popular female contraceptive.

"This has nothing to do with insurance," says Eugene Kontorovich, a professor at Northwestern University Law School. "Insurance is designed to protect people against bad luck. This benefit is for getting lucky."

Contraceptives are neither rare nor expensive. Virtually every pharmacy is brimming with them. Plan B, a "morning after" pill that may induce abortion, is available in college vending machines. Goodrx.com offers one-month supplies of 21 different oral contraceptives under \$25. Who knew? Women arranged pregnancy-free sex pre-Obama.

Obama is a spectacularly powerful man who flexes his gargantuan muscles so he can have his way with comparatively powerless females.

Disgusting.

Obama should unhand the Little Sisters of the Poor so they can spread their love. Meanwhile, women should acquire contraceptives just as Obama expects men to obtain condoms — with their own money.

The Little Sisters of the Poor need a battle cry. They should paraphrase the title of the 55th book by the late, great William F. Buckley Jr., a devout Roman Catholic: "Pay for your own goddamn birth control."

— *Deroy Murdock is a Manhattan-based Fox News contributor and a media fellow with the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford University.*



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**freddy reidenschneider** • 6 months ago

Sweet as these nuns are, they are wrong. The courts will not impose their religious rules on others. If they don't want to use birth control that is their choice. If they don't want to buy it, OK. But forcing their employees to make the same religious choices is obviously unconstitutional. This is not a close or interesting legal question. The nuns are going to lose.

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**RouxBella** → **freddy reidenschneider** • 6 months ago

OMG! Such foolishness. If "they" want contraceptives, let the find another place of employment. There is nothing in the Constitution that guarantees a female's decision to use contraceptives. The Sisters will not lose.

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**freddy reidenschneider** → **RouxBella** • 6 months ago

Watch and learn. Tea party meets real world.

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**torourke78** → **ExRepug** • 6 months ago

Wrong. Do you not understand that here in the United States, contraception is legal, sold in virtually every drug store in the country, sold online (did you actually read the article you are commenting on?), costs two dollars a day, is sold for nine dollars at Walmart or Target, is fully subsidized for those under the poverty line, and is handed out for free at Planned Parenthood? No one, not even the Little Sisters of the Poor, is preventing anyone from going to the nearest drug store and purchasing contraception. Nancy Pelosi told us at the beginning of this entire farce that 98% of Catholic women have used contraception. How is this possible if access to contraception was "blocked" by so many religious employers? The CDC reported in 2009 that contraceptive use is basically universal and that "lack of access" to contraception played no statistical role in thousands of unplanned pregnancies that they studied. Maybe because most women are not as stupid and helpless as you seem to think they are that they

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**torourke78** → **ExRepug** • 6 months ago

Sarcasm noted. Um, thanks? Do you have any arguments for why the mandate advances a compelling government interest?

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