

March for Life v. California

Case Name: *March for Life v. California*

Status: Hearing in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California on December 16, 2020. The Court stayed the case while the Biden administration works to roll back protection for religious and moral objectors.



Background: March for Life is a pro-life nonprofit organization founded in 1973 following the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to legalize abortion in *Roe v. Wade*. It is the sponsor of the annual pro-life march in Washington, DC. March for Life strives to operate consistently with its pro-life beliefs in everything it does. March for Life does not promote abortion through the health insurance coverage it offers to its employees because this would directly contradict and undermine its own mission. The Supreme Court ruled in *Little Sisters of Poor v. Pennsylvania* that the government can exempt religious organizations from including abortifacients in their health plans when the organization holds a religious or moral objection to abortion. Nevertheless, the state of California and other states are attempting to circumvent this ruling and force staunch pro-life organizations such as March for Life to provide abortion services under their employee healthcare plan. This would constrain pro-life organizations to contribute to the very enterprise they are fighting against. ADF represents March for Life in a lawsuit asking the state of California to ensure that pro-life organizations like March for Life can pursue their missions consistent with their beliefs.

Key Points:

- Forcing organizations to violate their beliefs is unconstitutional and has no place in American society. The government should not mandate its skewed morality into law. The effects of such measures inevitably result in a society with restricted freedom.
- States should protect the basic freedom to live and work according to one's convictions.
- A government that can force a pro-life group to fund abortions can force anyone to violate their beliefs. The government should be freedom's greatest defender, not its greatest threat.

Key Facts:

- In *Little Sisters of the Poor v. Pennsylvania*, the Supreme Court ruled that organizations can be exempt from providing abortifacients in their health plans when they object on religious and moral grounds.
- States like California are trying to force pro-life organizations like March for Life to include abortifacients in their employee healthcare plan, even though this undermines their own mission.
- It's not just March for Life's freedom at stake, it's everyone. When the government can come in and force pro-life groups (or in the case of the Little Sisters of the Poor, even nuns) to violate their convictions by funding abortion-causing drugs, then we do not live in a free America.

The Bottom Line: No one should be forced to pay for or participate in abortions – least of all pro-life groups like March for Life.