

Baptist college sues over contraceptive mandate

by [Bob Allen](#)

February 23, 2012

ALEXANDRIA, La. (ABP) – A Baptist college in Louisiana is suing the federal government over a requirement that religious schools and hospitals cover contraceptives in insurance for their employees, including birth control pills that induce abortion.

The Alliance Defense Fund filed a federal lawsuit Feb. 18 in Alexandria, La., on behalf of Louisiana College, a private Christian school affiliated with the Louisiana Baptist Convention. The lawsuit claims that new rules mandating coverage of FDA-approved contraceptives violate the college's confession of faith, the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message, which upholds the "sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death."

The lawsuit cites SBC resolutions opposing the manufacture and sale of RU-486, called the "abortion pill" because it is taken to end an early pregnancy after unprotected sex or if other birth control fails. It also points to FDA approval in 2010 of ella, an emergency contraceptive effective up to five days after conception.

The lawsuit says requiring Louisiana College to provide health insurance for its employees that covers abortion-inducing drugs would violate "sincerely held religious beliefs regarding abortion." It seeks to block enforcement of the contraceptive mandate as a violation of the school's constitutional rights under the First and Fourth amendments, as well as the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

"LC cannot provide health care insurance covering abortion, abortifacient or embryo-endangering methods, or related education and counseling without violating its deeply held religious beliefs and its Christian witness," the lawsuit maintains.

It describes a compromise announced Feb. 10 by President Obama requiring insurance companies to pay for birth control if religious employers object as

“fictitious,” because insurers would pass those costs on to employers through premiums. It says that even trying to determine whether a school like Louisiana College qualifies for exemption from the rule as a religious institution requires the government to examine religious beliefs and doctrines in ways that excessively entangle church and state.

“The Obama administration invented a fake ‘right’ to get ‘free’ abortion pills and sterilization and elevated it above real freedoms protected by the First Amendment,” said ADF Senior Counsel Kevin Theriot. “This calculated and intentional attempt to eradicate constitutional protections should terrify every freedom-loving American.”

ADF-allied attorney and co-counsel Mike Johnson, dean of Louisiana College’s Pressler School of Law, said the administration “has purposely transformed a non-existent problem -- access to contraception -- into a constitutional crisis.”

“This mandate offers no choice,” Johnson said. “Americans either comply and abandon their convictions or resist and be punished.”