



MUSLIMS FOR
PROGRESSIVE VALUES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Muslims For Progressive Values Joins Major Mainstream Religious Leaders In Support Of White House On Contraceptive Coverage In Health Care Reform.

Los Angeles, CA – February 8, 2012 – Muslims for Progressive Values (MPV) joins major mainstream religious leader in supporting the White House on contraceptive coverage in health care reform. Other organizations supporting the reform that upholds a woman’s right to reproductive justice include Catholics for Choice, The National Council for Jewish Women, The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice and The Religious Institute.

Muslims for Progressive Values has long been a supporter of women’s rights and continues to do so in joining other major religious organizations in issuing a statement in support of the White House health care reform which mandates insurance coverage for contraceptive services regardless of religious affiliation. We agree that a religious institution should not be allowed to impose its values over a woman’s reproductive rights. While exception has been allowed for those institutions that are purely sectarian, this arrangement reflects MPV’s principle of the separation of religious and State authorities.

MPV operates on Ten Principles of which number six reads: “Women’s Rights: We support women’s agency and self-determination in every aspect of their lives. We believe in women’s full participation in society at every level. We affirm our commitment to reproductive justice and empowering women to make healthy decisions regarding their bodies, sexuality and reproduction.”

Muslims for Progressive Values, along with the leaders of these national Christian, Jewish and Muslim organizations, affirm:

“We stand with President Obama and Secretary Sebelius in their decision to reaffirm the importance of contraceptive services as essential preventive care for women under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, and to assure access under the law to American women, regardless of religious affiliation. We respect individuals’ moral agency to make decisions about their sexuality and reproductive health without governmental interference or legal restrictions. We do not believe that specific religious doctrine belongs in health care reform – as we value our nation’s commitment to church-state separation. We believe that women and men have the right to decide whether or not to apply the principles of their faith to family planning decisions, and to do so they must have access to services. The Administration was correct in requiring institutions that do not have purely sectarian goals to offer comprehensive preventive health care. Our leaders have the responsibility to safeguard individual religious liberty and to help improve the health of women, their children, and families. Hospitals and universities across the religious spectrum have an obligation to assure that individuals’ conscience and decisions are respected and that their students and employees have access to this basic health care service. We invite other religious leaders to speak out with us for universal coverage of contraception.”

Signed,

Catholics for Choice, Jon O'Brien, President
Central Conference of American Rabbis, Rabbi Jonathan Stein, President
Concerned Clergy for Choice, Rabbi Dennis Ross, Director
Disciples Justice Action Network, Rev. Dr. Ken Brooker Langston, Director
Episcopal Divinity School, The Very Reverend Dr. Katherine Hancock Ragsdale, President



Episcopal Women's Caucus, Rev. Dr Elizabeth Kaeton, Convener
Hadassah, Marcie Natan, National President
Jewish Reconstructionist Federation, Robert Barkin, Interim Executive Vice President
Jewish Women International, Lori Weinstein, Executive Director
Methodist Federation for Social Action, Jill Warren, Executive Director
Muslims for Progressive Values, Ani Zonneveld, President
National Council of Jewish Women, Nancy Kaufman, CEO
Planned Parenthood Clergy Advisory Board, Rev. Jane Emma Newall, Chair
Rabbinical Assembly, Rabbi Julie Schonfeld, Executive Vice President
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, Rev. Steve Clapp, Chair
Religious Institute, Rev. Dr. Debra W. Haffner, Executive Director
Society for Humanistic Judaism, M. Bonnie Cousens, Executive Director
The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, Rabbi Steven Wernick, CEO
Union Theological Seminary, Rev. Dr. Serene Jones, President
Unitarian Universalist Association, Rev. Peter Morales, President
United Church of Christ, Rev. Geoffrey Black, General Minister and President

To learn more about MPV please visit www.mpvusa.org.

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To arrange for an interview of Ani Zonneveld please contact her at 323-842-2869 (PST) or ani@mpvusa.org

Muslims for Progressive Values (MPV) is a 501 (c) (3) founded in 2007. MPV asserts that Islam is inherently progressive, inclusive and egalitarian which is an understanding that informs the ten principles by which the organization is guided. In the short years since its inception, MPV has expanded to include chapter and affiliates in Los Angeles, New York, Washington DC, Atlanta and Philadelphia as well as in Ottawa and Toronto, Canada. More information can be found at www.mpvusa.org.