

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Congressman Jeff Fortenberry is pleased to announce that 213 Members of Congress, a near-majority of the House of Representatives, have cosponsored his bipartisan HR 1179, the *Respect for Rights of Conscience Act*.

Two of the newest cosponsors include House of Representatives Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy and Fred Upton, Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which has primary jurisdiction over the bill.

McCarthy and Upton join the following House of Representatives leadership in cosponsorship of this legislation: Chief Deputy Majority Whip Peter Roskam, Vice Chair of the House Republican Conference Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Secretary of the House Republican Conference John Carter, Republican Policy Committee Chairman Tom Price, Republican Study Committee Chairman Jim Jordan, Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers, Armed Services Committee Chairman Buck McKeon, Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan, Education and the Workforce Committee Chairman John Kline, Ethics Committee Chairman Jo Bonner, Homeland Security Committee Chairman Peter King, House Administration Committee Chairman Dan Lungren, Judiciary Committee Chairman Lamar Smith, Financial Services Committee Chairman Spencer Bachus, Foreign Affairs Committee Chairwoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Science, Space, and Technology Committee Chairman Ralph Hall, Small Business Committee Chairman Sam Graves, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman John Mica, Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Jeff Miller, and Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence Chairman Mike Rogers.

"I'm pleased that a near-majority of the House of Representatives have joined us in saying it's time to act to protect Americans' most basic rights - our religious freedom and rights of conscience," said Fortenberry. "These leaders stand with more than 220 other House and Senate colleagues of both parties in calling for swift action on this bill."

Fortenberry introduced the *Respect for Rights of Conscience Act* last March to protect the religious liberties and conscience rights of every American. The bill would put into place religious freedom and conscience protections that were effective prior to the 2010 health care law. It has gained considerable support since the Obama Administration's late January rule forcing Americans to pay for drugs and procedures they may find objectionable.

"The final rule that was filed last Friday did not make any changes to the HHS mandate," said Democrat Congressman Dan Lipinski, a cosponsor of the bill. "We still need to pass the *Respect for Rights of Conscience Act* in order to protect the conscience rights of all Americans."

Currently, the bill has 213 cosponsors in the House. In the Senate, Senator Roy Blunt is advancing this same legislation, with nearly 40 cosponsors.

H.R. 1179 enjoys the endorsements of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, National Right to Life Committee, Americans United for Life, and other organizations. Numerous other organizations, including the Christian Medical Association and Family Research Council, have urged support of the bill.

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