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Columbus Signs on to U.S. Supreme Court Brief Defending Birth Control Access

City Attorney Klein says rollback of health care policy would add stress to families and communities during uncertain time

COLUMBUS – Today, Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced that the City of Columbus has joined 32 municipalities nationwide to protect access to contraceptive health care coverage. The City has joined a U.S. Supreme Court [amicus brief](#) challenging the Trump administration’s efforts to upend access to free birth control through employer-sponsored insurance.

“The Trump administration is focused on chipping away access to affordable reproductive health care. We won’t stand for it,” said City Attorney Klein. “Birth control is health care and family planning should be up to a woman and her physician, not her employer.”

The Supreme Court is currently reviewing a lower-court decision, which invalidated two Trump administration rules creating both religious and moral exceptions to the contraceptive mandate of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Under the ACA, employer-sponsored insurance plans – which provide most private insurance coverage in the country – must cover all FDA-approved contraception at no cost to plan beneficiaries.

In addition to arguing that the moral exemption rule has no legal justification, the brief also discusses the impact of these rules on the delivery of health care in many cities and counties. As a result of the rules, some individuals will forego contraceptive care, while others will be forced to obtain less effective types of contraception. This will have wide-ranging impacts on communities, as they are forced to pay for contraceptives once covered by private insurance and incur costs related to unplanned pregnancies and health needs of children. The brief cites research indicating that every \$1 investment made in public family planning services saves \$7 in Medicaid expenditures.

As argued in the brief, the rules would impose unnecessary costs on cities and counties and use up precious resources, which is particularly concerning given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

“Right now, millions of Americans are out of work and wondering how they’ll pay their bills,” said City Attorney Klein. “Taking away an essential health care service would be yet another blow to families who are struggling. And it will put additional stress on our overextended communities who will be forced to make up for this lack of critical care.”

The brief was filed in two consolidated cases before the U.S. Supreme Court: *Little Sisters of the Poor v. Pennsylvania* and *Pennsylvania v. Trump*. Public Rights Project served as counsel of record for the brief, which was co-written by attorneys in the Oakland City Attorney's Office, with assistance from the San Francisco Affirmative Litigation Project at Yale Law School. The Cities of Dayton and Cincinnati are also signed on to the brief.

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