

HB 1730 -- Religious Beliefs and Moral Convictions of Certain Persons and Entities

Sponsor: Cox

This bill establishes protections for the religious beliefs and moral convictions of certain persons and entities regarding specified health care coverage. In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Prohibits any employee, self-employed person, or any other person from being compelled to obtain coverage or be discriminated against or penalized for declining or refusing coverage for abortion, contraception, or sterilization in a health plan if the items or procedures are contrary to the religious beliefs or moral convictions of the person;

(2) Prohibits an employer, health plan provider or sponsor, health care provider, or any other entity from being compelled to provide coverage for or be discriminated against or penalized for declining or refusing coverage in a health plan for abortion, contraception, or sterilization if they are contrary to his or her religious beliefs or moral convictions;

(3) Prohibits a government entity or entity acting in its capacity or a public official from discriminating or penalizing a health plan, plan sponsor, health care provider, employer, employee, or any other entity or person due to a religious or moral unwillingness to provide or obtain health plan coverage for, participate in, or refer for abortion, contraception, or sterilization in a health plan; and

(4) Requires the Attorney General to bring a civil action in any appropriate state or federal court whenever he or she has reasonable cause to believe that any entity, person, or group is being, has been, or is threatened to be denied any of the rights granted under these provisions or other law that protects their religious beliefs or moral convictions and the denial raises an issue of general public importance. Nothing can preclude a private cause of action by any person or entity who has been aggrieved by a violation of the laws that protect the religious beliefs or moral convictions of the entities or persons or be considered a limitation on any other remedy permitted by law. A court may order any appropriate relief, including recovery of damages, payment of reasonable attorney fees, costs, and expenses.

The bill contains an emergency clause.