

U.S. Senator Says He Would Practice Civil Disobedience If Obama Repeals Abortion 'Conscience Clause'

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□ Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) (Photo courtesy of Coburn's Web site)

(CNSNews.com) – Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.), who is also an OB/GYN, told CNSNews.com on Friday that many medical practitioners, including himself, will go to prison before agreeing to engage in medical practices they morally oppose, such as abortion.

Earlier that same day, the Obama administration had announced it was “reviewing” a Bush administration regulation known as the “conscience clause.” That Health and Human Services regulation protects health-care workers at federally funded institutions from having to engage in practices that violate their moral or religious beliefs. These practices include performing or referring abortions, performing sterilizations, or giving or receiving training in these practices.

Federal funding is widespread in the health care sector owing to such programs as Medicare, Medicaid, the newly expanded SCHIP insurance program for children, and the many billions in federal funds spent each year on medical research.

The Obama administration’s “review” is considered the precursor to rescinding the regulation.

“I think a lot of us will go to jail,” Coburn told CNSNews.com when asked what would happen if the administration reverses the policy. “Let’s see them prosecute the first one of us for not doing that.”

By that comment, Coburn meant that doctors, himself included, are willing to defy the law before agreeing to perform medical procedures that violate their conscience, a Coburn spokesman clarified.

Coburn spoke to CNSNews.com after he delivered a speech at the annual Conservative Political Action Committee (CPAC) in Washington, D.C., on Friday.

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