

North American Energy Access Act

On Tuesday, my bill, the North American Energy Access Act (H.R. 3548) was approved by the House Energy and Commerce Committee. This bill take the politics out of the permitting process over the Keystone XL pipeline by removing the president's authority and giving it to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). It instructs FERC to approve the pipeline within 30 days of receiving the permit application – if it complies with the State Department's Final Environmental Impact Statement. This legislation also respects the State of Nebraska's ongoing process of determining an acceptable pipeline route through Nebraska. Let's put the politics aside and get on with it. We need the jobs, oil, and energy security that Keystone will bring our country. It is not unprecedented to lay an oil pipeline across America. Many pipelines already crisscross our great country. We've got to move the Keystone XL Pipeline forward, despite the president's effort to kill it – and this bill does just that. For more information on this subject [click here](#).

Forcing Contraceptive Coverage

After two weeks of increasingly intense criticism over Obamacare's disregard for religious liberty, today the White House announced a "compromise" on the birth control mandate on employers – as required by a provision in the 2010 healthcare legislation. Earlier this week, I signed a bipartisan letter to Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius in opposition to the recent mandate regarding conscience rights. This mandate required religious-affiliated organizations which offer health insurance to cover the full cost of contraceptives, sterilization, and abortion inducing medications even if it is a clear violation of their conscience rights.

The abortion provision was and continues to be an insult – to American Catholics, and all Americans who love our Constitution, the freedoms it guarantees us, and the limited powers that it allows our government.

Forcing faith-based employers like Catholic universities, hospitals, and charities to pay for abortion-triggering drugs and contraception - services that they consider immoral - was a horrible misstep. It was an attack on the free exercise of religion, guaranteed to Americans by the U.S. Constitution, and a misguided effort to expand the Federal Government's powers even further. But this goes beyond church-affiliated hospitals and charities – small business owners who have religious objections are still forced to pay an insurance company for coverage that

includes abortion-triggering drugs and contraception. This debate is far from over, and I will continue to fight for conscience rights of both individuals and institutions.