



## **House Bill 649: Tax Breaks for Corporate Lawbreakers Encourages Employers to Deny Birth Control Access to Women**

HB 649 by state Rep. Jonathan Stickland, R-Bedford, would give Texas businesses a reimbursement for state taxes if they are fined for refusing to comply with the federal Affordable Care Act's requirement for emergency birth control coverage in their employees' health insurance. That means any corporation or employer in Texas could refuse coverage simply by citing a conflict with "religious convictions of the owners of the business."

### **Texans oppose this measure.<sup>i</sup>**

56 percent of registered voters in Texas oppose allowing bosses to deny their employees health care coverage for birth control.

68 percent of registered voters in Texas agree that it is important that all women have access to birth control.

### **HB 649 violates individuals' religious freedom.**

Corporations or bosses should not be able to impose their religious beliefs on their employees' health care decisions by denying them coverage for birth control. Women should be able to make decisions about their own health care no matter where they work.

The federal birth control requirement already exempts churches and other religious institutions. And corporations do not have a religious liberty right to opt out of providing health insurance plans that include birth control coverage.

### **HB 649 will lead to higher health care costs for families.**

Limiting access to birth control will have real consequences for Texas families, including higher health care costs due to more unplanned pregnancies. Families, not employers or the government, should be able to make their own decisions about when or if to have children.

### **HB 649 would be costly for Texas taxpayers.**

The corporate tax breaks in HB 649 would put other taxpayers on the hook for millions of dollars in fines incurred by private businesses. Politicians in Austin shouldn't force Texas families to subsidize businesses that choose to break the law.

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<sup>i</sup> Greenberg Quinlan Rosner poll of registered voters in Texas, February 2013, for the Texas Freedom Network Education Fund.