

## Okay Not to Harm

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A recent appeals court ruling means that (some) doctors and other medical practitioners won't be forced to violate their ethical principles against doing harm.

The Fifth Circuit ruling affirms a lower-court decision “permanently enjoining [HHS] from requiring Franciscan Alliance to perform gender-reassignment surgeries or abortions in violation of its sincerely held religious beliefs.”

What is troubling about the decision is its apparent incompleteness.

***We don't live in that free society. But at least we can hope that no person will be compelled to provide the types of services that violate the person's moral conscience.***

In a truly free society, no private professionals or organizations would be coerced to offer their services to anybody. Everybody would be free to participate or to decline to participate in any transaction with a prospective customer related to any medical procedure. Just as any



person is now (mostly) free to patronize or not patronize any provider of a good or service.

We don't live in that free society. But at least we can hope that no person will be compelled to provide the types of services that violate the person's moral conscience.

Like services they believe harm others.

That harm *children* . . . including the unborn.

So the court's ruling is fine — as far as it goes. But it seems to protect only persons making religious objections, or only members of the Franciscan Alliance, not also non-religious medical practitioners who also morally object to providing abortions or sex-change operations.

Which means that there is more legal work to be done to protect the rights of all of us.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.