

# The MED Act: Why We Must Preserve Rights of Conscience for Medical Professionals

The MED Act allows doctors, nurses, and certain other medical professionals to decline to perform procedures that violate their conscience.



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In 2022, Paige Casey was [fired for her faith](#). A nurse practitioner and a devout Catholic, Paige served patients diligently and without complaint for years, but because of her religious beliefs, she could not in good conscience provide or facilitate the use of abortion-inducing drugs.

After three years of accommodating Paige's religious beliefs, her employer, CVS, announced that it would no longer approve reasonable accommodations like Paige's. Her religious accommodation was discontinued, and she was fired because of her adherence to her beliefs.

Sadly, stories like Paige's are not uncommon. As health care becomes increasingly politicized, medical professionals are being forced to choose between their deeply held beliefs and their livelihoods.

Consider this:

- Among Christian medical students, 36 percent say they have experienced discrimination or pressure during medical school based on their moral, ethical, or religious beliefs.
- One in 5 medical students say they have chosen not to practice in a certain field because of hostility toward their beliefs in that area of practice. Most of the time, these students were on track to become pro-life OB/GYNs who would have been able to provide critical care for women and their unborn babies.
- Nine out of 10 religious doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals say they would rather stop practicing medicine than violate their ethical, moral, or religious beliefs.

It's simple: every American should have the freedom to operate according to their ethical and religious beliefs—and that includes doctors, nurses, and other medical providers. The Constitution protects their freedom as much as everyone else's.

In fact, the freedom to live and work consistent with one's conscience is at the heart of what motivates many who enter the medical field, a profession full of individuals who dedicate their lives to healing and "doing no harm."

But while medical professionals gladly serve all people, many object to prescribing specific drugs—such as pills that induce abortion—or performing specific procedures—such as a medically unnecessary mastectomy for a teenage girl as part of a so-called "gender transition." For many doctors and nurses, participating in these prescriptions and procedures violates their oath to "do no harm."

Driving medical professionals out of their fields because of their beliefs not only violates their [rights of conscience](#); it also jeopardizes patient care by exacerbating critical shortages in the medical field.

Thankfully, protecting conscience rights in the medical field is a growing national movement. States are stepping up and protecting their medical professionals from the exact situation Paige faced.

Since 2021, five new states have passed laws that ensure medical professionals and organizations cannot be forced to participate in health-care services that violate their conscience. In many states, this legislation is referred to as the "MED Act."

What does the MED Act do?

1. It protects nurses, doctors, and the health-care institutions where they work from being mandated to participate in a specific procedure that violates their ethical or religious beliefs.
2. It shields medical professionals from losing their jobs or facing criminal charges for exercising their rights of conscience.
3. It enhances patient care by protecting whistleblowers who report violations of laws or practices that put patient health at risk.

The MED Act simply allows doctors, nurses, and certain other medical professionals to decline to perform procedures that violate their conscience. It's specifically limited to conscience-based objections to particular health-care services. In other words, doctors can choose not to provide a *particular health service* to which they have a conscience objection, but they cannot refuse care to a *person*.

At its core, the MED Act is designed to ensure that doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals aren't forced to leave their ethics and religious beliefs at the door when they serve their patients.

Regardless of your beliefs about the practice of medicine, we should all agree that those in the medical field should not be forced to participate in prescribing drugs and performing procedures that violate their core beliefs.

