# PUBLIC SUBMISSION

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**Comment On:** EBSA-2010-0018-0002
Group Health Plans and Health Insurance Issuers Relating to Coverage of Preventive Services under Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act: Amendment

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## Submitter Information

**Name:** Bill Haines
**Address:**
   Charlottesville,  VA,
**Organization:** Secular Coalition for America

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## General Comment

Religious employers deserve no special treatment when it comes to providing women basic and necessary health care. No employer has the right to force religious tenets on its employees, whether that employer is defined as a religious or secular employer.

I encourage the adoption of the interim final rules without further relaxation of the definition of "religious employer." The proposed definition, as used by a majority of States, is adequate to allow the government to provide religious accommodation to religious employers, such as houses of worship, and to the few employees who fit within the definition without infringing on the basic rights of health care for women who might otherwise simply work for a religiously based organization. The proposed definition rightly excludes charities and medical facilities that have religious ties or missions but are not religious employers.

The government should make clear in the final rules that a female spouse or immediate female family member covered by the insurance of a religious employer as defined by the proposed amendments would be able to receive the comprehensive health care benefits even if the employee who originally receives benefits is in one of the unique positions exempted by the proposed amendments.