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NEWS

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Statement on Decision in Religious Liberty Case

Richard E. Barnes, executive director of the New York State Catholic Conference, issued the following statement following today's 3-2 decision 11 months after arguments by the New York State Supreme Court Appellate Division, Third Department. The decision upheld a lower court ruling in favor of the state in a case challenging the constitutionality of a law which forces religious employers, such as Catholic Charities, Catholic hospitals, Catholic schools and Baptist churches to violate the tenets of their faith:

“We take strong encouragement in the forceful dissent by Presiding Justice Cardona and Justice Spain, which gives us confidence that the plaintiffs will ultimately prevail at the Court of Appeals. This case is not about the right to contraception; we have never challenged employees' right to use contraception. We have simply maintained that our religious beliefs prevent us from paying for something we teach is sinful. We believe that the advocates of this legislation have their sights set on mandating coverage for abortion, in an attempt to destroy the Church's network of social services, hospitals, nursing homes and schools, which serve millions of New Yorkers every year. We will continue to resist these efforts and to assert our right to religious liberty protected by the New York State and United States constitutions and to follow our teachings.”

The Catholic Conference represents New York State's Bishops in matters of public policy.