

## Testimony of Craig Mitchell

### Greetings

I come before you today to express my concerns not as a religious leader, but as an American. My father served for twenty years in the United States Air Force. My step father served for twenty years in the United States Air Force also. I served for twelve years as a USAF officer, and attained the rank of major in the reserves. I swore my brother in when he became an active duty second lieutenant. So with all of this, I have a very strong view of what it means to be an American. I do not object to this mandate upon health care only because it is not consistent with my faith. No, I object to this mandate because it is not good for America.

To be an American means that we stand for the constitution of the U.S. The more that we find out about this health care bill, the more that we find our constitution has been violated. I and many others swore to defend this constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic. Yet our elected officials have created this health care nightmare that requires every citizen to buy medical insurance, whether they want it or not. It is as if the commerce clause did not even exist.

To be an American means that we stand for religious freedom. This mandate is contrary to everything that I and every other person who wore the uniform stands for regardless of what their faith was. This is true of people who had no faith. It is inconceivable to me and to many others that such a bald faced attempt to step on the constitution of this great country was even proposed. It is for this reason that I travelled to be here today to make my objections known.

I am a Southern Baptist minister and a professor of Christian ethics. As such, I know that Baptists have stood at the forefront of religious liberty. This goes all the way to Isaac Backus, Hezekiah Smith and others who pushed for freedom of religion. When Thomas Jefferson talked about a wall of separation between church and state, he was opposing persecution of people for their beliefs, but that is exactly what this mandate does. This mandate, in the name of health care, seems designed to offend those who have religiously informed moral sensibilities. Simply put, this mandate forces people to violate their consciences. A government that will force its citizens to violate their consciences has stepped over a critical boundary. If the purpose of government is to serve its people, then this rule is wrong. The arguments used to defend this mandate are no different from the old argument that says "We had to destroy the village in order to save it."

It is the church that was responsible for the creation of hospitals. The church was also responsible for much of the development of healthcare. With this kind of history, it is ironic that the religious organizations should have their rights crushed in the name of health care. If this is

allowed to stand then there is nothing that the U.S. government cannot compel its citizens to do. Explain to me how all of this is consistent with the American ideal.

On Friday, the president made some changes to the mandate by having insurance companies pay for the contraceptives and abortions. As an economist, I know that a tax liability on either the buyer or seller of a good will still be felt by the other. Consequently the requirement for insurance companies to pay for this mandate will still be paid by their customers. In other words, this *solution* does not in any significant way dodge the religious liberty problems associated with this mandate, because those in the religious institutions will still have to foot at least part of the bill. As such, my religious freedoms are still being violated. If the president is allowed to have his way, I and every other American will have no recourse to address egregious act.

As an economist, I also know that when the tax incidence is on the supplier that the cost of the good or service increases. The president's health care bill was sold with the idea that it would cut costs. We are finding thus far that it is becoming far more expensive than it was originally planned to be. This latest wrinkle only adds to the costs. In effect, it adds insult to injury, especially when you consider that most religious institutions are self- insured..

In conclusion, this rule is wrong not just for religious conservatives, it is wrong for all Americans, because it takes away the freedom of the citizens while emboldening the federal government to do whatever it wants. It is wrong because it violates the constitution. It is wrong because it violates religious liberty. It is wrong because it forces people to violate their consciences. It is wrong because it is more expensive. This ruling is just plain wrong for America

## Craig Vincent Mitchell, PhD

### Short Bio

Craig Vincent Mitchell, PhD is Associate Professor of Christian Ethics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary where he also serves as director of the Land Center for Cultural Engagement. In addition, Dr. Mitchell is also a Research Fellow for the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. Dr Mitchell also serves as a part time lecturer in economics at the University of Texas in Arlington.

Dr Mitchell has completed seven degrees. He holds a bachelor of science degree in electronic engineering technology/ mathematics from Savannah State University and a bachelor of science in electrical engineering from the Naval Postgraduate School (in Monterey, CA). In addition, he holds masters degrees in engineering management, information systems (both from West Coast University. He completed a masters of divinity at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS). In 2011 he completed an MA degree in economics from the University of Texas in Arlington. He holds a PhD in Christian ethics and philosophy of religion from SWBTS. He is the author of two books: *Charts of Christian Ethics* and *Charts of Philosophy and Philosophers* (both published by Zondervan). He is also the author of numerous articles. Dr Mitchell is a member of the Evangelical Theological Society, the Society of Biblical Literature, the Society of Christian Economists and has served on the executive committee of the Evangelical Philosophical Society. Dr. Mitchell was ordained into Christian ministry on December 8, 1990 at Discovery Church (Southern Baptist Convention) in Fort Worth Texas.

Before seminary, Dr. Mitchell attained the rank of major in the United States Air Force. He spent twelve years on active duty testing aircraft and spacecraft (1980-1992). The spacecraft include: Minuteman III, Peacekeeper missile, Small ICBM, Titan IV advanced Solid Rocket Motor Unit testing, and space shuttle mission STS-39. He tested electronic warfare systems on board a variety of aircraft, including: B-52, FB-111, B-1b, and B-2. Most of his flying hours were on the B-52. During his career, he was awarded the Meritorious Service medal, the Air Force Commendation medal (with one oak leaf cluster), the Air Force Achievement medal (with one oak leaf cluster), and the National Defense Service medal. In addition he was awarded the Gold Certificate of Merit by the Association of Old Crows for his work in testing electronic warfare systems..

Dr. Mitchell also spent two years in the commercial space launch business as the Base Operations Manager for E'Prime Aerospace Corporation at Vandenberg AFB, California (1993-1995). He also served as an airport commissioner at the city airport of Lompoc, California (1994-1995).

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
Witness Disclosure Requirement – “Truth in Testimony”  
Required by House Rule XI, Clause 2(g)(5)

Name:

Craig Mitchell

1. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) you have received since October 1, 2008. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract. none

2. Please list any entity you are testifying on behalf of and briefly describe your relationship with these entities.

none

3. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) received since October 1, 2008, by the entity(ies) you listed above. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract.

none

I certify that the above information is true and correct.

Signature:

Craig Mitchell

Date:

14 February 2012