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**Christian Legal Society Welcomes the Executive Order
Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty**

“With today’s executive order, President Trump promised that his Administration will restore the respect for religious freedom that characterized the Clinton and Bush Administrations but was sadly lacking in the last Administration,” explained Kim Colby, Director of Christian Legal Society’s Center for Law & Religious Freedom. “Today’s executive order is welcome news for Americans of all faiths.”

“Religious liberty is America’s most distinctive contribution to humanity,” Ms. Colby observed. “But over the past eight years, too often it was undermined by administrative actions that disregarded this most basic human right.” For example, in issuing the HHS Mandate, the previous administration sharply departed from this Nation’s traditional bipartisan protection of religious conscience in the abortion context – a tradition that had been followed by all previous presidents over the past 40 years.

In response to the HHS Mandate, Christian Legal Society filed nearly 25 friend-of-the-court briefs from 2012-2016 on behalf of religious charities and schools in support of challenges to the HHS Mandate by Little Sisters of the Poor and other religious objectors. Today’s executive order begins the critical process of rescinding the HHS Mandate’s assault on Americans’ religious freedom. Religious charities and religious schools should never have been burdened by the federal government’s controversial requirement that religious objectors pay for drugs that they believe end human lives.

Equally importantly, today’s order directs all federal agencies “to vigorously enforce Federal law’s robust protections for religious freedom.” Christian Legal Society welcomes federal agencies’ reinvigoration of existing federal protections for religious freedom. But much work also remains for Congress. The vulnerability of our First Freedom to bureaucratic assaults became all too obvious over the past eight years. Christian Legal Society urges Congress to work in a bipartisan manner to enact urgently needed statutory protections for religious freedom.

About Christian Legal Society:

Christian Legal Society was instrumental in the enactment of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, the federal law that has safeguarded Americans’ religious freedom since its overwhelmingly bipartisan passage in 1993. Christian Legal Society is a nationwide association of Christian legal professionals dedicated to serving Jesus Christ through the practice and study of law, the defense of religious freedom, and the provision of legal aid to the poor.

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