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## Blunt Amendment dies

K.E. Campbell

A little bit more of our religious and economic freedom, which is to say our freedom generally, died today in the U.S. Senate. In a 51-48 vote, the [Blunt amendment](#), which would have "allowed" employers to opt out of providing health insurance coverage for items or services contrary to their religious beliefs or moral convictions, was defeated. Technically, the vote was to table the amendment. The only GOP senator to join 50 Democrats in killing the amendment was Sen. Olympia Snowe (ME). Three Democrat senators supported it: Bob Casey (PA), Joe Manchin (WV), and Ben Nelson (NE).

The amendment was drafted in response to the Obama Administration's recent contraception mandate. Seven states have already [filed suit](#) to block the mandate.

The fact that so many people buy into the premise of the federal government having authority to "allow" employers to do something doesn't bode well for liberty, whether the matter is religious related or not. With rare exception -- though we've already strayed far in the wrong direction -- what goes on between employers and employees should be left to, well, the employer and the employee. The same goes for arrangements or contracts between businesses and their vendors; in this case, insurance providers.

Standing in favor of the Blunt amendment and against the mandate, Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) [said](#), "This is tyranny. This is discrimination masquerading as compassion, and I'm going to fight it."

Two days ago Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) spouted the statist line by [calling](#) the Blunt amendment "politics masquerading as morality" adding "It allows any insurance company or any employer to deny coverage for any service they choose, based on a religious belief or a moral conviction. What is a moral conviction? I have moral convictions. You have moral convictions. We

have different moral convictions. Any employer can do this, based on a vague abstraction."

Regarding the amendment generally and Sen. Mikulski's remarks specifically, including those about our "different moral convictions," Roger Pilon of the Cato Institute [wrote](#) an excellent retort:

Precisely. That's why, in a free society, we don't throw everybody and everything into the common pot. We allow individuals to pursue their individual goals according to their "different moral convictions." We don't force them into relationships, whether with employers or insurance companies or whomever, that offend those convictions. Yet the more we socialize ever more of life-as we've gone far in doing with everything from health care to retirement to education and so much more-the more we deny individuals the choices that would otherwise be available to them in a truly free society.

We haven't yet reached the point, as in some societies, where we regulate, through force of law, where people may live, or travel, or go to college, or what medical procedures they may or may not have. But with Obamacare, especially, we're headed down that road...

Republicans would be smart, therefore, if they stopped talking about contraceptives and started talking about liberty-about where this country is headed. The Tea Party people understood that, for the most part, and look what they accomplished in the last election. The country is ready for bold but credible ideas about getting government out of our lives. We need people willing to say that the only thing we're all in together is making this again a free country.

"Making this again a free country." That is to say, we no longer are. On his radio program the other night and in his new bestselling book, [Ameritopia](#), Mark Levin [asked](#) what may be the question of our time:

"...whether, in America, the people's psychology has been so successfully warped, the individual's spirit so thoroughly trounced, and the civil society's institutions so effectively overwhelmed that revival is possible. Have too many among us already surrendered or been conquered? Can the people overcome the constant and relentless influences of ideological indoctrination, economic manipulation, and administrative coerciveness, or have they become hopelessly entangled in and dependent on a ubiquitous federal government? Have the

Pavlovian appeals to radical egalitarianism, and the fomenting of jealousy and faction through class warfare and collectivism, conditioned the people to accept or even demand compulsory uniformity as just and righteous? Is it accepted as legitimate and routine that the government has sufficient license to act whenever it claims to do so for the good of the people and against the selfishness of the individual?"

While pondering our answers it would behoove us to act fast because utopian-minded progressives are busy burying the roots of ObamaCare as deeply into the fabric of this country as possible before the looming Supreme Court hearing. Just last week the Department of Health & Human Services [announced](#) it had awarded \$639 million of our tax money to seven entities in eight states to create a "new type of nonprofit health insurer." According to [Fox News](#), \$56 million went to an "Alinsky-tied group."

Tyranny indeed.