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So the Little Sisters of the Poor will get their day in court.

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In the Supreme Court, that is. This past Friday, the justices agreed to hear the Little Sisters' argument that not only would ObamaCare's contraceptive mandate force them to violate their beliefs, the Obama administration's "accommodation"—to have them sign a paper that would empower the sisters' insurer to provide the birth control—is just an accounting gimmick.

As President Obama continues to threaten them with millions of dollars in IRS fines, the sisters have made their position clear: "We . . . cannot possibly choose between our care for the elderly poor and our faith, and we shouldn't have to."

Manifestly these are women who trust in God. But as their case heads to the Supreme Court (along with those of six other plaintiffs), it's not a miracle the sisters are banking on. Maybe that's because they have representing them one of America's most accomplished nonprofit law firms: the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which a former U.S. assistant attorney general once described as "God's ACLU."

"The narrow issue here is the birth-control mandate," says Becket Fund President William Mumma. "The larger issue is that religious liberty is not some subcategory of liberty. It's a bellwether, because a government that doesn't respect a citizen's liberty to worship God the way he sees fit is not likely to respect other liberties."

The Becket Fund was founded back in 1994 by Kevin "Seamus" Hasson, a Notre Dame Law School alum who worked for the Justice Department under Samuel Alito during the Reagan years. Its opening was timely, coming on the heels of [Antonin Scalia](#)'s controversial majority opinion in *Employment Division v. Smith* (1990), in which the court upheld Oregon's right to deny unemployment benefits to Native Americans who had been fired for using peyote, an illegal hallucinogen, in their religious rituals.

Two things make the Becket Fund unique. First, Becket is as ecumenical about whom it will defend (everyone from Anglicans to Zoroastrians, it likes to say) as it is agnostic on the substantive issues (e.g., abortion, contraception, gay marriage) that underlie these cases.

Second, Becket is picky about the cases it will litigate. At a 2012 Becket awards dinner, Mr. Hasson described the Becket philosophy. "Prudence," he said, "isn't caution. It's knowing when to take a risk."

His successor, Mr. Mumma, comes from a very different background. The former CEO of Mitsubishi UFJ Securities (USA) was raised in a nonreligious home (“no Mumma had seen the inside of a church before I came to my faith,” he says) and arrived at religious liberty via libertarianism. He says that Becket achieves outcomes such as the 9-0 Supreme Court decision in *Hosanna-Tabor v. E.E.O.C.* (2012)—upholding the right of churches to choose their own ministers—because its lawyers are first and foremost constitutionalists, not partisans in the so-called culture wars.

Whatever they are doing, it’s working. In terms of its annual budget (\$5 million) and manpower (30 employees), the Becket Fund may be dwarfed by the American Civil Liberties Union, which has dozens of local chapters in addition to a national organization. But pound for pound, especially where it counts, few boast the impact the Becket Fund has had.

Its litigation success rate is 85%. At the Supreme Court, its success rate is 100%, including the June 2014 *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* decision. Unlike the two other high-profile Supreme Court challenges to ObamaCare, in this case the justices sided with the challengers—a for-profit family business that also objected to ObamaCare’s contraceptive mandate.

It’s no coincidence, says Mr. Mumma, that the Little Sisters case will put Becket before the Supreme Court for the fifth time in four years. In its earlier days, most of Becket’s litigation was at the local and state level, whether it was Orthodox Jews trying to get kosher meals in prisons or Christians fighting municipal bans on nativity displays on public property. Now the challenges come from the highest levels of government.

“If you want to understand what’s going on, don’t look at the Republican Party,” says Mr. Mumma. “Look at our amicus briefs.” By this he means the diversity of the groups that have submitted defenses of the Little Sisters. These range from 20 state governments and the libertarian Cato Institute to Jewish rabbis and the leading seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Manifestly, the Obama administration understands the optics of a White House threatening to sic the IRS on religious women who run loving homes for the poor and elderly. Because it gets immediately to the arrogance and overreach of this administration. Which also explains why the Obama Justice Department pleaded with the Court not to take the Little Sisters’ case.

“The administration objected because it knows that the Little Sisters clarify the stakes,” he says. “Because if the government is willing to put its boot on the neck of an order of nuns, who’s safe?”