



## *Obama, Not Santorum, is the Theocrat*

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I rarely find myself disagreeing with Michael Tanner of the Cato Institute, but I think he's obscuring his own point in the [column](#) he wrote for the New York Post over the weekend.

In his article, entitled, "Misconception," he argues that "Republicans should stop fighting against birth control and start battling government control instead." I don't know whether he's not listening to the same people I am, or he's just not listening. Every Republican I have heard speak - and I mean every single one - has made it perfectly clear they don't give a damn whether anyone uses contraception. Their objection *is* the government compulsion.

But because - in this particular case - the mandate happens to violate a particular religion's (Catholicism's) tenets, there is a lot of discussion about *what* those tenets are, and *why* the Catholic Church takes the positions it does. That invariably leads to arguments about *whether* that ought to be the Church's position. Some have chosen to come to the Church's defense, and tried to explain the reasoning behind the Church's position. They have the right to do this if they wish; Republicans' defense of the Catholic Church's *right* to take its position on contraception is not the same thing as saying it is the *Republican Party's* position, or ought to be.

Were Jews and Muslims being forced to eat pork, one could just as easily defend their right not to do so, without agreeing with that stricture of their faith, or understanding it, much less ever intending to adhere to it one's self.

While Tanner is absolutely correct that the emphasis needs to be on impermissible government intrusion, he is unfortunately feeding two media memes on this issue, which are demonstrably false and deliberately misleading.

The first obfuscation is the media's obsession with finding some number of Catholics who use birth control, as if this refutes the Church's claim of governmental interference with the freedom of religion. That is completely irrelevant. It isn't about how many Catholics disagree with the Church's position on birth control; it is that the government

has no business telling the Catholic Church what it can or cannot believe, or ask its followers to believe.