Published On June 30th, 2014

U.S. Supreme Court Contraceptive Ruling

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In a 5-4 decision that was described by one of the dissenting Justices as a “decision of startling breadth”, the Supreme Court has ruled in **Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.** that closely held for-profit corporations are not compelled to provide contraceptive coverage under the Affordable Care Act’s preventive care mandate if they object to that coverage on religious grounds. The decision is a “win” for Hobby Lobby who had challenged the contraceptive mandate saying it forced them to either violate their faith or pay fines.

Based on initial reports, the ruling applies only to contraception and not to other possibly objectionable medical treatments, such as transfusions and vaccinations. It also specifically excludes other possibly illegal discrimination (probably attempting to prevent discrimination against certain groups of employees whose lifestyles might be objectionable to certain religious groups).

The decision will require significant study, but it is possible that its holding will apply in concept to the objections being raised by not for profit religiously affiliated groups – although those groups have been afforded an accommodation under current regulations. It is also possible, if not likely, that the Administration will now offer to provide such coverages at its own expense, as alluded to in a concurring opinion.

We will provide more insights and information after further review of the decision.