Americans United for Life Celebrates Win for Illinois Conscience Rights in Case AUL Championed Since 2005

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 11, 2012 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- After seven years in court, the decision by the Illinois Attorney General not to file an appeal in *Morr-Fitz vs. Quinn* means that Illinois pharmacists finally cannot be forced to dispense life-ending drugs against their Rights of Conscience. Those rights are protected under the Illinois Health Care Rights of Conscience Act and the Illinois Religious Freedom Restoration Act, as well as the U.S. Constitution. Americans United for Life attorneys have been engaged in the case since 2005, defending the freedoms of pharmacists Luke Vander Bleek and Glenn Kosirog, representing their interests in court along with several Illinois pharmacies owned by them.

"This is a tremendous victory. Rights of conscience are under assault today and this case is a rebuke to those who argue that the government can violate the First Amendment Rights of Americans by forcing them to advance an anti-life agenda. This includes the abortion industry which aggressively supported the coercive mandate in Illinois and is arguing for similar measures in other states," said Americans United for Life President and CEO Dr. Charmaine Yoest.

In 2005, AUL filed a lawsuit challenging a rule issued by then-Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich forcing pharmacists and pharmacies to dispense so-called "emergency contraceptives" "without delay." At that point, then-Director of AUL's Center for Rights of Conscience Ed Martin was lead counsel in the case along with AUL Staff Counsel Mailee Smith. When the suit was filed, Martin noted:

"Luke Vander Bleek is suing to protect his rights as an American — his right to build a business, contribute to society as a health care professional, and to live according to his principles. The Governor is trampling the rights of health care professionals and small business owners through his emergency rule."

AUL Advisory Board member, Mark L. Rie
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