

(ORDER LIST: 579 U.S.)

TUESDAY, JUNE 28, 2016

CERTIORARI -- SUMMARY DISPOSITIONS

14-1469 WASHBURN, JAYDEN R. V. NORTH DAKOTA  
14-1506 BEYLUND, STEVE M. V. NORTH DAKOTA  
14-1512 HARNIS, CHRISTOPHER D. V. NORTH DAKOTA  
15-129 WOJAHN, DOUGLAS D. V. LEVI, DIR., ND DEPT. OF TRANSP.  
15-243 BAXTER, KYLE L. V. NORTH DAKOTA

The petitions for writs of certiorari are granted. The judgments are vacated, and the cases are remanded to the Supreme Court of North Dakota for further consideration in light of *Birchfield v. North Dakota*, 579 U. S. \_\_\_\_ (2016).

15-518 WALL, REBECCA J. V. STANEK, SHERIFF

The petition for a writ of certiorari is granted. The judgment is vacated, and the case is remanded to the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit for further consideration in light of *Birchfield v. North Dakota*, 579 U. S. \_\_\_\_ (2016).

15-989 KORDONOWY, JONATHAN V. NORTH DAKOTA

The petition for a writ of certiorari is granted. The judgment is vacated, and the case is remanded to the Supreme Court of North Dakota for further consideration in light of *Birchfield v. North Dakota*, 579 U. S. \_\_\_\_ (2016).

15-1052 HEXOM, JOSEPH W. V. MINNESOTA

The petition for a writ of certiorari is granted. The judgment is vacated, and the case is remanded to the Court of

Appeals of Minnesota for further consideration in light of *Birchfield v. North Dakota*, 579 U. S. \_\_\_\_ (2016).

15-5587 SHARBUTT, JIMMY L. V. VASQUEZ, WARDEN

The motion of petitioner for leave to proceed *in forma pauperis* and the petition for a writ of certiorari are granted. The judgment is vacated, and the case is remanded to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit for further consideration in light of *Mathis v. United States*, 579 U. S. \_\_\_\_ (2016).

15-6468 PATRIE, RANDY V. UNITED STATES

15-6603 GOODWIN, DAVID A. V. UNITED STATES

The motions of petitioners for leave to proceed *in forma pauperis* and the petitions for writs of certiorari are granted. The judgments are vacated, and the cases are remanded to the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit for further consideration in light of *Mathis v. United States*, 579 U. S. \_\_\_\_ (2016).

15-6783 DIAZ-MORALES, RAFAEL V. UNITED STATES

The motion of petitioner for leave to proceed *in forma pauperis* and the petition for a writ of certiorari are granted. The judgment is vacated, and the case is remanded to the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit for further consideration in light of *Mathis v. United States*, 579 U. S. \_\_\_\_ (2016).

15-7106 CASTRO-MARTINEZ, GERMAN V. UNITED STATES

The motion of petitioner for leave to proceed *in forma pauperis* and the petition for a writ of certiorari are granted. The judgment is vacated, and the case is remanded to the United

States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit for further consideration in light of *Mathis v. United States*, 579 U. S. \_\_\_\_ (2016).

15-7249 BRYANT, DARNELL C. V. UNITED STATES

The motion of petitioner for leave to proceed *in forma pauperis* and the petition for a writ of certiorari are granted. The judgment is vacated, and the case is remanded to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit for further consideration in light of *Mathis v. United States*, 579 U. S. \_\_\_\_ (2016).

15-7832 GUEVARA, JOSE L. V. UNITED STATES

The motion of petitioner for leave to proceed *in forma pauperis* and the petition for a writ of certiorari are granted. The judgment is vacated, and the case is remanded to the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit for further consideration in light of *Mathis v. United States*, 579 U. S. \_\_\_\_ (2016).

15-7846 SANDERS, TIMOTHY V. UNITED STATES

The motion of petitioner for leave to proceed *in forma pauperis* and the petition for a writ of certiorari are granted. The judgment is vacated, and the case is remanded to the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit for further consideration in light of *Mathis v. United States*, 579 U. S. \_\_\_\_ (2016).

15-7987 GARZA, JOSE G. V. MINNESOTA

The motion of petitioner for leave to proceed *in forma pauperis* and the petition for a writ of certiorari are granted. The judgment is vacated, and the case is remanded to the Court

of Appeals of Minnesota for further consideration in light of *Birchfield v. North Dakota*, 579 U. S. \_\_\_\_ (2016).

15-8015 BROOKS, DANA L. V. UNITED STATES

The motion of petitioner for leave to proceed *in forma pauperis* and the petition for a writ of certiorari are granted. The judgment is vacated, and the case is remanded to the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit for further consideration in light of *Mathis v. United States*, 579 U. S. \_\_\_\_ (2016).

**CERTIORARI GRANTED**

14-1055 LIGHTFOOT, CRYSTAL M., ET AL. V. CENDANT MORTGAGE CORP., ET AL.

The petition for a writ of certiorari is granted.

15-423 VENEZUELA, ET AL. V. HELMERICH & PAYNE INT'L, ET AL.

The petition for a writ of certiorari is granted limited to Question 3 presented by the petition.

15-486 IVY, DONNIKA, ET AL. V. MORATH, MIKE

15-497 FRY, STACY, ET VIR V. NAPOLEON COMMUNITY SCH., ET AL.

15-649 CZYZEWSKI, CASIMIR, ET AL. V. JEVIC HOLDING CORP., ET AL.

The petitions for writs of certiorari are granted.

15-961 ) VISA INC., ET AL. V. OSBORN, SAM, ET AL.

15-962 ) VISA INC., ET AL. V. STOUMBOS, MARY, ET AL.

The petitions for writs of certiorari are granted. The cases are consolidated and a total of one hour is allotted for oral argument.

15-1111 BANK OF AMERICA CORP., ET AL. V. MIAMI, FL

15-1112 WELLS FARGO & CO., ET AL. V. MIAMI, FL

The petitions for writs of certiorari are granted. The cases are consolidated and a total of one hour is allotted

for oral argument.

15-1191 LYNCH, ATT'Y GEN. V. MORALES-SANTANA, LUIS R.

The petition for a writ of certiorari is granted.

**CERTIORARI DENIED**

14-997 CURRIER, MS HEALTH OFFICER V. JACKSON WOMEN'S HEALTH ORG.

14-1508 CULVER, COREY V. LEVI, GRANT

14-9861 MANSKA, CHRISTOPHER L. V. MINNESOTA

14-10423 GAEDE, CHRISTOPHER M. V. ILLINOIS

15-64 JENSEN, JAMIEN R., ET AL. V. EXC INC., ET AL.

15-386 ROUNKLES, TODD J. V. LEVI, GRANT

15-403 WILLIAMS, THOMAS C. V. MINNESOTA

15-840 DUNCAN, CHRISTOPHER V. KENTUCKY

15-848 BENNETT, DAVID R. V. MINNESOTA

15-931 NEVADA V. BARRAL, DUSTIN J.

15-1063 TEXAS V. VILLARREAL, DAVID

15-1200 SCHIMEL, ATT'Y GEN. OF WI V. PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF WI, ET AL.

15-5307 MAWOLO, ROLAND O. V. MINNESOTA

15-5315 ISAACSON, COREY C. V. MINNESOTA

15-6495 GUARNERO, ROGELIO V. WISCONSIN

15-6645 BOAZ, THOMAS V. UNITED STATES

15-7286 PONCE-CORTES, JORGE V. UNITED STATES

15-7528 BURKE, KENNETH H. V. UNITED STATES

15-7918 WILLIS, SID E. V. UNITED STATES

15-7926 OGITCHIDA, TABASHISH A. V. MINNESOTA

15-7960 LIPPY, GARY L. V. MINNESOTA

15-8853 DJORDJEVIC, ALEKSANDAR V. UNITED STATES

The petitions for writs of certiorari are denied.

**REHEARING DENIED**

14-915

FRIEDRICHS, REBECCA, ET AL. V. CA TEACHERS ASSOC., ET AL.

The petition for rehearing is denied.

ALITO, J., dissenting

**SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES**

STORMANS, INC., DBA RALPH'S THRIFTWAY, ET AL. *v.*  
JOHN WIESMAN, SECRETARY, WASHINGTON  
STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ET AL.

ON PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE UNITED  
STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT

No. 15–862 Decided June 28, 2016

The petition for a writ of certiorari is denied.

JUSTICE ALITO, with whom THE CHIEF JUSTICE and JUSTICE THOMAS join, dissenting from the denial of certiorari.

This case is an ominous sign.

At issue are Washington State regulations that are likely to make a pharmacist unemployable if he or she objects on religious grounds to dispensing certain prescription medications. There are strong reasons to doubt whether the regulations were adopted for—or that they actually serve—any legitimate purpose. And there is much evidence that the impetus for the adoption of the regulations was hostility to pharmacists whose religious beliefs regarding abortion and contraception are out of step with prevailing opinion in the State. Yet the Ninth Circuit held that the regulations do not violate the First Amendment, and this Court does not deem the case worthy of our time. If this is a sign of how religious liberty claims will be treated in the years ahead, those who value religious freedom have cause for great concern.

I

The Stormans family owns Ralph's Thriftway, a local grocery store and pharmacy in Olympia, Washington. Devout Christians, the Stormans seek to run their business in accordance with their religious beliefs. Among those beliefs is a conviction that life begins at conception and that preventing the uterine implantation of a ferti-

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lized egg is tantamount to abortion. Consequently, in order to avoid complicity in what they believe to be the taking of a life, Ralph’s pharmacy does not stock emergency contraceptives, such as Plan B, that can “inhibit implantation” of a fertilized egg, 1 Supp. Excerpts of Record in Nos. 12–35221, 12–35223 (CA9), p. 1245 (SER). When customers come into the pharmacy with prescriptions for such drugs, Ralph’s employees inform them that the pharmacy does not carry those products, and they refer the customers to another nearby pharmacy that does. The drugs are stocked by *more than 30 other pharmacies within five miles of Ralph’s*. *Stormans, Inc. v. Selecky*, 854 F. Supp. 2d 925, 934 (WD Wash. 2012); see SER 1293. These pharmacies include an Albertson’s located 1.9 miles from Ralph’s and a Rite-Aid located 2.3 miles away.<sup>1</sup>

As explained by the 5 national and 33 state pharmacist associations that urge us to take this case, “facilitated referral supports pharmacists’ professionally recognized right of conscience” “without compromising patient care.” Brief for National and State Pharmacists’ Associations as *Amici Curiae* 17. In addition to protecting rights of conscience, facilitated referral also serves more practical ends. Pharmacies can stock only a small fraction of the more than 6,000 FDA-approved drugs now available. Pharmacies of all stripes therefore “refer patients to other pharmacies at least several times a day because a drug is not in stock.” 854 F. Supp. 2d, at 934. Because of the practice of facilitated referrals, none of Ralph’s customers has ever been denied timely access to emergency contraceptives. *Id.*, at 933.

Nevertheless, in 2007 the Washington State Board of Pharmacy (Board) issued rules mandating that pharma-

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<sup>1</sup>These pharmacies were identified at trial as carrying Plan B. SER 1293. The distances are as calculated by Google Maps driving directions.

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cies like Ralph’s stock and sell contraceptives like Plan B. Under these regulations, a pharmacy may not “refuse to deliver a drug or device to a patient because its owner objects to delivery on religious, moral, or other personal grounds.” Brief in Opposition for Washington State Respondents 10. The dilemma this creates for the Stormans family and others like them is plain: Violate your sincerely held religious beliefs or get out of the pharmacy business.

Ralph’s, joined by two pharmacists with similar beliefs who work at other pharmacies, contends that the regulations target religiously motivated conduct for disfavored treatment and thereby “suppress religious belief or practice” in violation of the First Amendment’s Free Exercise Clause. *Church of Lukumi Babalu Aye, Inc. v. Hialeah*, 508 U. S. 520, 523 (1993). After a 12-day trial, the District Court agreed and enjoined the regulations, 854 F. Supp. 2d 925 (findings of fact and conclusions of law); *Stormans Inc. v. Selecky*, 844 F. Supp. 2d 1172 (WD Wash. 2012) (opinion granting injunction).

The District Court found that the regulations were adopted with “the predominant purpose” to “stamp out the right to refuse” to dispense emergency contraceptives for religious reasons. *Id.*, at 1178. Among other things, the District Court noted the following. When the Board began to consider new regulations, the Governor of the State “sent a letter to the Board opposing referral for personal or conscientious reasons.” 854 F. Supp. 2d, at 937. The State Human Rights Commission followed with “a letter threatening Board members with personal liability if they passed a regulation permitting referral” for religious or moral reasons. *Id.*, at 938; see App. to Pet. for Cert. 374a–399a. And after the Board initially voted to adopt rules allowing referrals for reasons of conscience, the Governor not only sent another letter opposing the draft rules but “publicly explained that she could remove the Board members” if need be. 854 F. Supp. 2d, at 938. “[T]his was the

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first instance in which a Governor had ever threatened the Board . . . with removal.” *Id.*, at 939.

The Board heeded the Governor’s wishes. As Steven Saxe, the Board’s executive director, explained at the time: “[T]he public, legislators and governor are telling us loud and clear that they expect the rule to protect the public from unwanted intervention based on the moral beliefs . . . of a pharmacist.” *Ibid.* “[T]he moral issue IS the basis of the concern.” *Ibid.* Saxe, a primary drafter of the regulations, recognized that the task was “to draft language to allow facilitating a referral for *only these non-moral or non-religious reasons.*” *Ibid.* He suggested that making an express “statement that does not allow a pharmacist/pharmacy the right to refuse for moral or religious judgment” might be a “clearer” way to “leave intact the ability to decline to dispense . . . for most *legitimate* examples raised; clinical, fraud, business, skill, etc.” *Ibid.* And in the end, that is what the Board did. While the regulations themselves do not expressly single out religiously motivated referrals, the Board’s guidance accompanying the regulations does: “The rule,” it warns, “does not allow a pharmacy to refer a patient to another pharmacy to avoid filling the prescription *due to moral or ethical objections.*” SER 1248 (emphasis added).

Although the District Court found that the Board’s intent was to target pharmacies that made referrals for religious or moral reasons, the court did not base its decision solely on that ground. Instead, the court considered the design of the regulations and concluded that they discriminated against religious objectors. 854 F. Supp. 2d, at 967–990. Not only do the rules expressly contain certain secular exceptions, but the court also found that in operation the Board allowed pharmacies to make referrals for many other secular reasons not set out in the rules. *Id.*, at 954–956, 970–971. The court concluded that “the ‘design of these [Regulations] accomplishes . . . a religious

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gerrymander” capturing religiously motivated referrals and little else. *Id.*, at 984 (quoting *Church of Lukumi Babalu Aye, supra*, at 535; some internal quotation marks omitted).

The State appealed the District Court’s decision, and the Ninth Circuit reversed. 794 F. 3d 1064 (2015). Both in the Ninth Circuit and before this Court, the State defends the regulations as necessary to “ensur[e] that its citizens have safe and timely access to their lawful and lawfully prescribed medications.” *Id.*, at 1084. But the State has conceded that this is not really a problem. It *stipulated* that “facilitated referrals do not pose a threat to timely access to lawfully prescribed medications,” and indeed “help assure timely access to lawfully prescribed medications . . . includ[ing] Plan B.” App. to Pet. for Cert. 335a.

I believe that the constitutionality of what Washington has done merits further review. As I discuss below, Ralph’s has made a strong case that the District Court got it right, and that the regulations here are improperly designed to stamp out religious objectors. The importance of this issue is underscored by the 38 national and state pharmacist associations that urge us to hear the case. The decision below, they tell us, “upheld a radical departure from past regulation of the pharmacy industry” that “threatens to *reduce* patient access to medication by forcing some pharmacies—particularly small, independent ones that often survive by providing specialty services not provided elsewhere—to close.” Brief for National and State Pharmacists’ Associations as *Amici Curiae* 4, 5. Given the important First Amendment interests at stake and the potentially sweeping ramifications of the decision below, I would grant certiorari.

## II

The question presented in this case concerns the constitutionality of two rules adopted by the Washington State

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Pharmacy Board in 2007. The first rule, known as the Delivery Rule, requires pharmacies to “deliver lawfully prescribed drugs or devices to patients and to distribute drugs and devices approved by the U. S. Food and Drug Administration for restricted distribution by pharmacies.” Wash. Admin. Code §246–869–010(1) (2009).<sup>2</sup> The Delivery Rule works in tandem with a pre-existing rule, called the Stocking Rule, that requires pharmacies to stock a “representative assortment of drugs in order to meet the pharmaceutical needs of its patients.” §246–869–150(1). The net result of these rules is that, so long as there is customer demand for emergency contraceptives, pharmacies like Ralph’s must stock and dispense them regardless of any religious or moral objections that their owners may have.

The Delivery Rule includes a number of exceptions. See

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<sup>2</sup>This rule provides in pertinent part as follows:

“(1) Pharmacies have a duty to deliver lawfully prescribed drugs or devices to patients and to distribute drugs and devices approved by the U. S. Food and Drug Administration for restricted distribution by pharmacies, or provide a therapeutically equivalent drug or device in a timely manner consistent with reasonable expectations for filling the prescription, except for the following or substantially similar circumstances:

“(a) Prescriptions containing an obvious or known error, inadequacies in the instructions, known contraindications, or incompatible prescriptions, or prescriptions requiring action in accordance with WAC 246–875–040.

“(b) National or state emergencies or guidelines affecting availability, usage or supplies of drugs or devices;

“(c) Lack of specialized equipment or expertise needed to safely produce, store, or dispense drugs or devices, such as certain drug compounding or storage for nuclear medicine;

“(d) Potentially fraudulent prescriptions; or

“(e) Unavailability of drug or device despite good faith compliance with WAC 246–869–150.

“(2) Nothing in this section requires pharmacies to deliver a drug or device without payment of their usual and customary or contracted charge.”

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§§246–869–010(1)(a)–(e), (2). Four of these are narrow. See §246–869–010(1)(a) (prescription is erroneous or has a known contraindication); §246–869–010(1)(b) (national and state emergencies); §246–869–010(1)(d) (potentially fraudulent prescriptions); §246–869–010(1)(e) (drug is temporarily out of stock). A fifth exception is broader: Under subsection (c), pharmacies need not stock prescription medications that require specialized equipment or expertise, including the equipment or expertise needed to compound drugs. §246–869–010(1)(c). And a sixth exception is very broad indeed: A pharmacy is not required to deliver a drug “without payment of [its] usual and customary or contracted charge.” §246–869–010(2). This means, among other things, that a pharmacy need not fill a prescription for a Medicaid patient. In addition, as discussed below, the District Court found that there are many unwritten exceptions to the Delivery and Stocking Rules. See *infra*, at 9–10.

The Board’s second new rule, called the Pharmacist Responsibility Rule, governs individual pharmacists. §246–863–095 (2010). The rule does not require any *individual pharmacist* to dispense medication in conflict with his or her beliefs. But because the Delivery Rule requires every *pharmacy* to dispense the medication, if a pharmacy wishes to employ a pharmacist who objects to dispensing a drug for religious reasons, the pharmacy must keep on duty at all times a second pharmacist who can dispense those drugs. We are told that few pharmacies are likely to be willing to bear this expense. Brief for National and State Pharmacists’ Associations as *Amici Curiae* 23–24.

### III

In *Employment Div., Dept. of Human Resources of Ore. v. Smith*, 494 U. S. 872 (1990), this Court held that “the right of free exercise does not relieve an individual of the

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obligation to comply with a ‘valid and neutral law of general applicability.’” *Id.*, at 879. But as our later decision in *Church of Lukumi Babalu Aye* made clear, a law that discriminates against religiously motivated conduct is not “neutral.” 508 U. S., at 533–534. In that case, the Court unanimously held that ordinances prohibiting animal sacrifice violated the First Amendment. This case bears a distinct resemblance to *Church of Lukumi Babalu Aye*.

In *Church of Lukumi Babalu Aye*, there was strong evidence that the ordinances were adopted for the purpose of preventing religious services of the Santeria religion. *Id.*, at 534. As noted, there is similar evidence of discriminatory intent here.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>It is an open question whether a court considering a free exercise claim should consider evidence of individual lawmakers’ personal intentions, as is done in the equal protection context. Compare *Church of Lukumi Babalu Aye*, 508 U. S., at 540 (opinion of KENNEDY, J.) (relying on such evidence), with *id.*, at 558 (Scalia, J., concurring in part and concurring in judgment) (rejecting such evidence). The Ninth Circuit, however, did not hold that such evidence was irrelevant; instead, it concluded that the record “does not reveal improper intent.” 794 F. 3d 1064, 1078 (2015). Ralph’s has a strong argument that the Ninth Circuit improperly substituted its own view of the evidence for that of the District Court.

In overturning the District Court’s finding, the Ninth Circuit pointed to evidence that the Board “was also concerned with the safe and timely delivery of many other drugs, which may or may not engender religious objections,” such as drugs for treating HIV. *Ibid.* But the District Court considered this evidence and found it “not inconsistent with the Board’s focus on conscientious objections to Plan B.” *Stormans, Inc. v. Selecky*, 854 F. Supp. 2d 925, 943 (WD Wash. 2012). The District Court further concluded that “such a focus is supported by the great weight of the evidence, including other documents issued by the Board,” as well as Board meetings and public testimony—all of which were “dominated by emergency contraception and conscientious objection to Plan B.” *Ibid.* For example, a survey the Board conducted in the lead up to its rulemaking “focused exclusively on Plan B and potential accommodations for conscientious objectors,” *ibid.*, while “the Board didn’t do any research or conduct any studies on HIV medications or how this rule might apply to HIV medications,” SER 654.

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Even if we disregard all evidence of intent and confine our consideration to the nature of the laws at issue in the two cases, the similarities are striking. In *Church of Lukumi Babalu Aye*, the challenged ordinances broadly prohibited the unnecessary or cruel killing of animals, but when all the statutory definitions and exemptions were taken into account, the laws did little more than prohibit the sacrifices carried out in Santeria services. *Id.*, at 535–538. In addition, the ordinances restricted religious practice to a far greater extent than required to serve the municipality’s asserted interests. *Id.*, at 538–539. Here, Ralph’s has made a strong showing that the challenged regulations are gerrymandered in a similar way. While requiring pharmacies to dispense all prescription medications for which there is demand, the regulations contain broad secular exceptions but none relating to religious or moral objections; the regulations are substantially under-inclusive because they permit pharmacies to decline to fill prescriptions for financial reasons; and the regulations contemplate the closing of any pharmacy with religious objections to providing emergency contraceptives, regardless of the impact that will have on patients’ access to medication.

A

Considering “the effect of [the regulations] in [their] real operation,” *id.*, at 535, the District Court concluded that the burden they impose “falls ‘almost exclusively’ on those with religious objections to dispensing Plan B,” 844 F. Supp. 2d, at 1188. The court found that “the rules exempt pharmacies and pharmacists from stocking and delivering lawfully prescribed drugs for an almost unlimited variety of secular reasons, but fail to provide exemptions for reasons of conscience.” *Ibid.* For example, the District Court found that a pharmacy may decline to stock a drug because the drug requires additional paperwork or

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patient monitoring, has a short shelf life, may attract crime, requires simple compounding (a skill all pharmacists must learn), or falls outside the pharmacy's niche (e.g., pediatrics, diabetes, or fertility). *Id.*, at 1190. Additionally, the court found, a pharmacy can "decline to accept Medicare or Medicaid or the patient's particular insurance, and on that basis, refuse to deliver a drug that is actually on the shelf." *Ibid.* As the District Court noted, such secular refusals "inhibit patient access" to medication no less than do religiously motivated facilitated referrals. *Ibid.* Allowing secular but not religious refusals is flatly inconsistent with *Church of Lukumi Babalu Aye*. It "devalues religious reasons" for declining to dispense medications "by judging them to be of lesser import than nonreligious reasons," thereby "singl[ing] out" religious practice "for discriminatory treatment." 508 U. S., at 537–538.

The Ninth Circuit did not dispute this logic. Instead, it held that the District Court committed clear error in finding that the regulations allow refusals for a host of secular reasons. 794 F. 3d, at 1080–1081. The Court of Appeals upheld the District Court's finding that pharmacies *in fact* refuse to stock and deliver drugs for secular reasons, but it disputed the District Court's finding that the Board actually *permits* such refusals. *Ibid.* I think it likely that the Court of Appeals failed to accord the District Court's findings appropriate deference. "If the district court's account of the evidence is plausible in light of the record viewed in its entirety, the court of appeals may not reverse it even though convinced that had it been sitting as the trier of fact, it would have weighed the evidence differently." *Anderson v. Bessemer City*, 470 U. S. 564, 573–574 (1985).

The District Court carefully laid out its rationale for finding that the regulations allow refusals for secular, but not religious, reasons. Secular refusals have been com-

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mon, and commonly known, both before and after the regulations were issued, yet the Board has never enforced its regulations against such practices. 854 F. Supp. 2d, at 956, 960. Nor has the Board issued any guidance disapproving secular refusals or otherwise made an “effort to curtail widespread referrals for business reasons.” *Id.*, at 960. By contrast, the Board has specifically targeted religious objections. Upon issuing the regulations, the Board sent a guidance document to pharmacies warning that “[t]he rule does not allow a pharmacy to refer a patient to another pharmacy to avoid filling the prescription *due to moral or ethical objections.*” SER 1248 (emphasis added). The negative implication is obvious. Additionally, a Board spokesman—who was charged with answering pharmacists’ inquiries about the rules’ requirements—testified that, “other than eliminating referral as an option for pharmacies which cannot stock Plan B for religious reasons, from a practical standpoint, nothing has changed after the enactment of these rules.” *Id.*, at 356; see *id.*, at 295.

The Ninth Circuit disregarded the Board’s failure to enforce its regulations against secular refusals on the ground that the Board does not pursue enforcement action unless it receives a complaint, and it has not received complaints against secular referrals. 794 F. 3d, at 1081. Putting aside the potential for abuse this system allows,<sup>4</sup> the point remains that the Board tolerates widespread secular refusals while categorically declaring religious ones verboten. That supports the District Court’s finding that the “real operation” of the regulations is to uniquely

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<sup>4</sup>The District Court noted that “an active campaign” by advocacy groups “to seek out pharmacies and pharmacists with religious objections to Plan B and to file complaints with the Board . . . has resulted in a disproportionate number of investigations directed at religious objections to Plan B”—with complaints against Ralph’s constituting a third of all complaints. 854 F. Supp. 2d, at 961.

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burden religiously motivated conduct.<sup>5</sup>

## B

Even if the Ninth Circuit were correct to reject the District Court’s finding that the Board condones many secular refusals, the Court of Appeals overlooked a basis for refusal that is written into the regulations themselves. “Nothing in this section,” the Delivery Rule states, “requires pharmacies to deliver a drug or device without payment of their usual and customary or contracted charge.” §246–869–010(2) (2009). The Ninth Circuit thought this exception unremarkable, asserting that “[n]obody could seriously question a refusal to fill a prescription because the customer did not pay for it.” 794 F. 3d, at 1080. But as the District Court found—and the Ninth Circuit simply ignored—this exception extends well beyond denying service to customers who won’t pay. It also allows a pharmacy to refuse to fill a prescription because it does not accept the patient’s insurance or because it does not accept Medicaid or Medicare—regardless of the amount of payment it would receive. 854 F. Supp. 2d, at 955, 972–973. A pharmacy accordingly may deny *all* prescriptions to certain patients, many of whom (those on Medicaid) are particularly likely to lack

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<sup>5</sup>The dozens of pharmacist associations supporting Ralph’s as *amici* give us another reason to question the Ninth Circuit’s conclusion that the regulations outlaw the secular bases for refusal that the District Court found were permitted. According to these groups, the Ninth Circuit’s conception of the regulations “open[s] the door to unprecedented state control over stocking decisions” by “anticipat[ing] the invalidation of a whole swath of reasons, both secular and non-secular, for declining to stock or deliver certain drugs.” Brief for National and State Pharmacists’ Associations as *Amici Curiae* 21. In other words, we are told, the Ninth Circuit has effectively read the regulations to require “that *all* pharmacies deliver *all* lawfully prescribed drugs,” *id.*, at 22—a striking departure from normal pharmaceutical practice that one would not expect the Board to adopt without giving some clear indication that it was doing so.

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ready means of traveling to another pharmacy. What is more, a pharmacy that refuses a patient's insurance does not even have to refer the patient to another pharmacy. *Id.*, at 973. This renders the regulations substantially underinclusive: They "fail to prohibit nonreligious conduct that endangers" the State's professed interest in ensuring timely access to medication "in a similar or greater degree than" religiously motivated facilitated referrals do. *Church of Lukumi Babalu Aye*, 508 U. S., at 543.

### C

One last example. In adopting the rules, the Board recognized that some pharmacy owners might "close rather than dispense medications that conflicts with their beliefs." App. to Brief in Opposition for Washington State Respondents 34a. Such closures would appear to inflict on customers a much greater disruption in access to medications than would allowing facilitated referrals: Shuttering pharmacies would make *all* of those pharmacies' customers find other sources for *all* of their medications, rather than have only some customers be referred to another pharmacy for a small handful of drugs. But the Board shrugged off this problem, asserting that it "may . . . be temporary" because a religious objector may be replaced by "a new operator who will comply with these rules." *Ibid.* I don't dispute that the market will often work to fill such openings, but it cannot reasonably be supposed that new pharmacies will appear overnight. The bottom line is clear: Washington would rather have no pharmacy than one that doesn't toe the line on abortifacient emergency contraceptives. Particularly given the State's stipulation that "facilitated referrals do not pose a threat to timely access" to such drugs, App. to Pet. for Cert. 335a, it is hard not to view its actions as exhibiting hostility toward religious objections.

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## IV

For these reasons and others, it seems to me likely that the Board's regulations are not neutral and generally applicable. Quite the contrary: The evidence relied upon by the District Court suggests that the regulations are targeted at religious conduct alone, to stamp out religiously motivated referrals while allowing referrals for secular reasons (whether by rule or by wink). If that is so, the regulations are invalid unless the State can prove that they are narrowly tailored to advance a compelling government interest. The Ninth Circuit did not reach this question, as it upheld the regulations under far less demanding rational-basis review. 794 F. 3d, at 1084. I will not try to answer here whether the regulations meet strict scrutiny, except to observe that the State's justification that the regulations advance its "interest in ensuring that its citizens have safe and timely access to their lawful and lawfully prescribed medications," *ibid.*, seems awfully hard to square with the State's stipulation that "facilitated referrals do *not* pose a threat to timely access to lawfully prescribed medications," App. to Pet. for Cert. 335a (emphasis added).

\* \* \*

"The Free Exercise Clause commits government itself to religious tolerance, and upon even slight suspicion that proposals for state intervention stem from animosity to religion or distrust of its practices, all officials must pause to remember their own high duty to the Constitution and to the rights it secures." *Church of Lukumi Babalu Aye, supra*, at 547. Ralph's has raised more than "slight suspicion" that the rules challenged here reflect antipathy toward religious beliefs that do not accord with the views of those holding the levers of government power. I would grant certiorari to ensure that Washington's novel and concededly unnecessary burden on religious objectors does

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not trample on fundamental rights. I respectfully dissent.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>The Court's denial of certiorari does not, of course, preclude petitioners from bringing a future as-applied challenge to the Board's regulations.

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**SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES**

DELAWARE STRONG FAMILIES *v.* MATTHEW DENN,  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF DELAWARE, ET AL.

ON PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE UNITED  
STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE THIRD CIRCUIT

No. 15–1234. Decided June 28, 2016

The petition for a writ of certiorari is denied. JUSTICE ALITO would grant the petition for a writ of certiorari.

JUSTICE THOMAS, dissenting from the denial of certiorari.

First Amendment rights are all too often sacrificed for the sake of transparency in federal and state elections. “Sunlight,” this Court has noted, is “the best of disinfectants” in elections. See *Buckley v. Valeo*, 424 U. S. 1, 67 (1976) (*per curiam*) (quoting L. Brandeis, *Other People’s Money* 62 (1933)). But that is not so when “sunlight” chills speech by exposing anonymous donors to harassment and threats of reprisal. See *Citizens United v. Federal Election Comm’n*, 558 U. S. 310, 482–484 (2010) (THOMAS, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part); see also, *e.g.*, *NAACP v. Alabama ex rel. Patterson*, 357 U. S. 449, 462–463 (1958). This case presents the opportunity to clarify that the State’s interest in transparency does not always trump First Amendment rights. I respectfully dissent from the denial of certiorari.

I

In 2012, Delaware Strong Families, a tax-exempt non-profit organization, produced a “General Election Values Voter Guide” for Delaware citizens. The voter guide listed all candidates running for Congress or the state legislature and indicated whether the candidate “[s]upport[ed],” “[o]pposed,” or was “[u]ndecided” about various issues. The guide covered issues ranging from candidates’ posi-

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tions on “[g]iving tax dollars to Planned Parenthood” to “legalizing Internet gambling.” Delaware Strong Families, 2012 General Election Values Voter Guide 1–4, online at <http://www.delawarestrong.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/2012-C3-General-Election-Voter-Guide-v5.pdf> (as last visited June 23, 2016).

As Delaware Strong Families prepared to produce a similar voter guide for the 2014 election cycle, it filed this federal suit challenging Delaware’s newly enacted disclosure requirements that would require it to reveal many of its donors if it disseminated the voter guide. The Delaware Election Disclosures Act requires “[a]ny person other than a candidate committee or political party” who spends more than \$500 on “third-party advertisements . . . during an election period [to] file a third-party advertisement report” with the State Commissioner of Elections. Del. Code Ann., Tit. 15, §8031(a) (2015). A “third-party advertisement” includes “electioneering communication[s]” that “[r]efe[r] to a clearly identified candidate” and are “publicly distributed within 30 days before a primary election . . . or 60 days before a general election to an audience that includes members of the electorate for the office sought by such candidate.” §§8002(10)(a), 8002(27). The voter guide fits that description. Accordingly, Delaware Strong Families must report the names, addresses, and contribution amounts of not only those donors who earmarked their donations for the creation of the voter guide, but also any and all donors who contributed more than \$100 to the nonprofit during the election period. §8031(a)(3); see *Delaware Strong Families v. Attorney General of Delaware*, 793 F.3d 304, 307 (CA3 2015) (“Disclosure is not limited to individuals who earmarked their donations to fund an electioneering communication”).

The District Court enjoined the Act. The court observed that the Act required disclosure of “virtually every communication made during the critical time period, no mat-

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ter how indirect and unrelated it is to the electoral process,” including a presumptively neutral voter guide published by a presumptively neutral, tax-exempt, non-profit entity. *Delaware Strong Families v. Biden*, 34 F. Supp. 3d 381, 395 (Del. 2014). The court concluded that the relationship between the Act’s purpose and the First Amendment burdens it imposed was “too tenuous.” *Ibid.*

The United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit reversed. The court held that the Act’s far-reaching disclosure requirements were sufficiently tailored to Delaware’s asserted interest in an “informed electorate.” 793 F. 3d, at 309–312. It sufficed that the Act required only those organizations that disseminated communications during “the applicable ‘election period’” to disclose their donors. *Id.*, at 312.

## II

This Court has long considered disclosure requirements as “the least restrictive means of curbing the evils of campaign ignorance and corruption.” *Buckley*, 424 U. S., at 68. At the same time, the Court has recognized that “[i]t is undoubtedly true” that mandatory disclosure of donor names “will deter some individuals who otherwise might contribute” and “may even expose contributors to harassment or retaliation.” *Ibid.* These First Amendment harms justify eliminating disclosure requirements altogether. But even under this Court’s existing precedents, Delaware’s scheme is far broader than those the Court has previously upheld.

In my view, it is time for the Court to reconsider whether a State’s interest in an informed electorate can ever justify the disclosure of otherwise anonymous donor rolls. As the Court said in *McIntyre v. Ohio Elections Comm’n*, 514 U. S. 334 (1995), “[t]he simple interest in providing voters with additional relevant information does not justify a state requirement that a writer make statements

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or disclosures she would otherwise omit.” *Id.*, at 348; see also *id.*, at 360–367 (THOMAS, J., concurring in judgment) (discussing tradition of anonymous speech during the founding era); *Doe v. Reed*, 561 U. S. 186, 240 (2010) (THOMAS, J., dissenting) (“[A] long, unbroken line of this Court’s precedents holds that privacy of association is protected under the First Amendment”). The same rule should apply here. “Disclaimer and disclosure requirements enable private citizens and elected officials to implement political strategies *specifically calculated* to curtail campaign-related activity and prevent the lawful, peaceful exercise of First Amendment rights.” *Citizens United*, 558 U. S., at 483 (opinion of THOMAS, J.) (emphasis in original); *McConnell v. Federal Election Comm’n*, 540 U. S. 93, 275–276 (2003) (THOMAS, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part); see also *NAACP*, 357 U. S., at 462 (noting that disclosure of members’ names would expose them “to economic reprisal, loss of employment, threat of physical coercion, and other manifestations of public hostility”). Given the specter of these First Amendment harms, a State’s purported interest in disclosure cannot justify revealing the identities of an organization’s otherwise anonymous donors.

Even if the Court were to evaluate the Disclosures Act by applying its existing framework, the Delaware scheme sweeps far broader than those the Court has previously considered. Disclosure requirements “cannot be justified by a mere showing of some legitimate governmental interest.” *Buckley*, 424 U. S., at 64. Instead, disclosure requirements must withstand “exacting scrutiny.” *Ibid.* Exacting scrutiny requires the State to establish that “the disclosure requirement” is “substantial[ly] relat[ed]” to “a sufficiently important governmental interest.” *Citizens United*, *supra*, at 366–367 (internal quotation marks omitted); see also *Buckley*, *supra*, at 64–65 (same).

Here, the Third Circuit’s “exacting scrutiny” analysis

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compared the finer details of the Disclosures Act with the federal disclosure requirements. 793 F. 3d, at 309–312. Delaware’s scheme as applied to Delaware Strong Families, however, bears little resemblance to the federal disclosure requirements that this Court has considered. In *Buckley v. Valeo*, for example, the Court construed a federal disclosure provision to require disclosure only “for communications that expressly advocate the election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate” to “insure that the reach of the [federal provision wa]s not impermissibly broad.” 424 U. S., at 80 (footnote omitted). No one contends that Delaware Strong Families’ voter guide expressly advocates for a particular candidate. Later in *McConnell v. Federal Election Comm’n*, the Court upheld amended federal disclosure requirements as applied to the electioneering communications of “corporations and labor unions . . . fund[ing] broadcast advertisements designed to influence federal elections . . . while concealing their identities from the public” by “hiding behind dubious and misleading names.” 540 U. S., at 196–197 (internal quotation marks omitted). The record here contains no evidence of such “abuse” or “tactics.” *Ibid.* (internal quotation marks omitted). And finally in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Comm’n*, the Court concluded that federally required disclosure “avoid[ed] confusion by making clear” to voters that advertisements naming then-Senator Hillary Clinton and “contain[ing] pejorative references to her candidacy” were “not funded by a candidate or political party.” 558 U. S., at 368. But today’s case involves no such “pejorative references”—indeed, if the voter guide were anything but neutral, it would threaten Delaware Strong Families’ tax-exempt status.

Perhaps a mere “interest in an informed electorate,” 793 F. 3d, at 310, might justify a more tailored regime (though I have my doubts). But here, the Third Circuit failed to ask how that interest could justify mandatory disclosure

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merely because an organization mentions a candidate's name.

\* \* \*

In my view, the purported government interest in an informed electorate cannot justify the First Amendment burdens that disclosure requirements impose. See *Citizens United, supra*, at 483 (opinion of THOMAS, J.). But if the Court is determined to stand by its “exacting scrutiny” test, then this case is its proving ground. By refusing to review the constitutionality of the Delaware law, the Court sends a strong message that “exacting scrutiny” means no scrutiny at all. I respectfully dissent from the denial of certiorari.