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11623 Lake Shore  
Nampa, ID 83686  
(208) 880-9814

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**Staff Report**  
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## Wadsen supports religious protection for health workers

BOISE (AP) — Idaho Attorney General Lawrence Wadsen has signed a letter supporting President Donald Trump’s effort to protect the rights of health workers who object to participating in abortions and other procedures. Wadsen, a Republican, joined 16 other attorneys general in a March 27 letter to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar.

“The Department’s decision to return now to obeying these statutes and opinions is vital to restoring the rule of law to Washington,” the letter states. “Re-opening opportunities for cooperation between the Department and the state governments on the front lines of public health, and assuring that Americans may abide by their religious, moral, and ethical beliefs without fear of government intimidation and discrimination.”

Under Trump’s administration, a Conscience and Religious Freedom Division will be created to oversee cases where clinicians object to participating in abortion, euthanasia and other procedures because it would violate their conscience or religious beliefs.

“The health care field necessarily involves actions and decisions that implicate religious and moral convictions about human dignity and the sanctity of human life,” the letter continues.

The Family Research Council, National Right to Life and other social conservative groups have also pushed hard for government-wide enforcement of conscience protections.

More than 40 complaints have been filed since Trump’s election, alleging violations of conscience and religious rights. An estimated 18 million people work in the nation’s health care system. Critics say that’s a small number compared with the millions of health care workers. They worry that religion will become a pretext for discrimination. Wadsen is up for re-election this year and is seeking a fifth four-year term. He has no opponent in the GOP primary race and just one Democratic candidate in the November general election. A spokesman for Wadsen did not immediately return a request for comment about the letter.

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