

# Michelle Obama: 'We Want to Honor and Embrace All...Faith Traditions'

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By [Terence P. Jeffrey](#)



First Lady Michelle Obama  
(AP Photo)

(CNSNews.com) - At a White House Diwali celebration on Tuesday afternoon, First Lady Michelle Obama said that she and her husband wanted to celebrate all the faith and culture traditions 'that make us who we are as Americans.'

Even as she was saying this, there were 200 plaintiffs pursuing 77 lawsuits asking federal courts to protect their First Amendment right to the free exercise of religion from a regulation issued by the administration under Obamacare that requires health insurance plans to cover sterilizations, contraceptives and abortion inducing drugs and devices.

The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty [maintains a website](#) that tracks the lawsuits. The plaintiffs range from the Hobby Lobby stores to the Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. In September, the Department of Justice appealed the Hobby Lobby case to the Supreme Court, asking the court to force the family that owns Hobby Lobby to act against their Christian faith by making them buy insurance coverage for abortion-inducing drugs and devices.

"As you may know, we've celebrated this holiday here at the White House every year since Barack took office," Mrs. Obama said at the Diwali celebration. "And there's a reason why we've done that, and I mentioned it to the kids," she said. "When we say that we want to make the White House the 'people's house,' we mean all people. We mean that we want to honor and embrace all of the many cultures and faith traditions that make us who we are as Americans. And Diwali is very much one of those traditions."

"Diwali is a time for celebration," said the first lady. "But as we gather here this Diwali, we remember that there is still evil in the world."

In substantiating its suit against the Obama administration, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. submitted a memorandum to the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia that accused the administration of engaging in "a conscious political strategy to marginalize and delegitimize" Catholic beliefs.

"[T]he Government deliberately chose to pick a high-profile fight by forcing religious groups to provide or facilitate access to contraception in violation of their core beliefs," said the archdiocese statement to the court.

"[T]he record, moreover, establishes that the mandate was part of a conscious political strategy to marginalize and delegitimize plaintiffs' religious views on contraception by holding them up for ridicule on the national stage," said the memo. "For example, at a NARAL Pro-Choice America fundraiser, Defendant Sebelius stated: 'Wouldn't you think that people who want to reduce the number of abortions would champion the cause of widely affordable contraceptive services? Not so much.'"

The final version of the sterilization-contraception-abortifacient regulation issued by Secretary Sebelius would require ...

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