THE PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY REPORT

How Obama Stole Christmas

by John and Andy Schlafly

December 20, 2016

The Trump transition team is working on its first package of executive actions, including steps to rescind or revoke numerous improper executive actions by President Obama. Here are two federal regulations and further actions that Trump should take care of in his first day on the job as president.

The liberal "war on Christmas" is a recurring feature of the holiday season, but this year a federal regulation is being blamed for continuing that unhappy trend. At a senior living center called Mercy Village in Joplin, Missouri, residents were told they are forbidden to put traditional Christmas decorations in any of the common areas.

Mercy Village is owned by Denver-based Mercy Housing Inc., which receives federal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Mercy's management claimed that it was merely enforcing a HUD regulation that prohibits "discrimination" by housing providers on the basis of religion.

Mercy Village did have a so-called "holiday" tree in the main lobby, but when residents (at their own expense) placed a Nativity scene in the hallway of an upper floor, it was removed by the management. Even though no resident complained, the display could have been seen by other residents who might claim to be offended by the sight of a Nativity scene beneath the Christmas tree.

Mr. Dee Wampler, a prominent attorney from nearby Springfield, Missouri, informed Mercy Village that a 1984 decision of the U.S. Supreme Court found it perfectly constitutional to include a Nativity scene within a publicly funded Christmas display. But the management of Mercy Village was unmoved, insisting that Christmas decorations must remain inside the residents' individual apartments, and that all common areas must remain "religion neutral."

President-elect Trump was criticized for naming Dr. Ben Carson as the new Secretary of HUD because the eminent Dr. Carson has no experience in "housing policy." In fact, Dr. Carson's years of experience battling the forces of political

correctness make him perfectly suited for redressing the anti-Christmas regulations of federally subsidized housing.

Another regulation due for prompt revocation by the new administration is a last-minute rule to prevent states from defunding Planned Parenthood. This new rule became final on December 19 following an unusually short 30-day comment period, and is set to take effect on January 18, just two days before the President Trump will be inaugurated.

Obama's director of the Office of Population Affairs (OPA) complained that 13 states have restricted "certain types" of providers from participating in the federal program to prevent poor people from having children. Is it really the proper function of the federal government to prevent births to poor people? Yet that is the basic mission of the federal OPA, with the result that this new rule was issued at an especially offensive time, during the season when we celebrate the miraculous birth of a child to a poor family 2,000 years ago.

Trump won the pivotal Rust Belt states of Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania due to their loss in manufacturing jobs and due to the large numbers of Catholic and evangelical voters there who oppose the pro-abortion positions of Hillary Clinton. In Wisconsin, for example, many Democrats were unwilling to cast their ballot for Hillary Clinton, after her unapologetic support of abortion-on-demand throughout all nine months of pregnancy was exposed during the presidential debates.

Perhaps the most influential action that the incoming President Trump could take on his first day of office would be simply to withdraw the appeal by the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) of a splendid decision that declared illegal the taxpayer subsidies of Obamacare on the health insurance exchanges. If Trump merely withdraws the appeal of U.S. House of Representatives v. Burwell, which is as easy as filing a one-page document with the court, the subsidies would cease and the Obamacare health exchanges would mercifully collapse.

Those taxpayer subsidies are funding abortion in addition to wasting billions of dollars in money that could be better spent on real health care and other good uses. In Alaska, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Washington, it is

impossible to buy a health insurance plan on the exchange that does not cover elective abortion.

The incoming President Trump could go further and order the Internal Revenue Service not to enforce any fines or penalties for individuals who elect not to purchase Obamacare-compliant insurance, which would allow them to use their own money in ways that best suit their own needs. Nothing is more wasteful and inefficient as a government forcing people to purchase a product they do not want, in this case Obamacare and its funding of abortion.

Amid the holiday merry-making and revelry, which as Shakespeare observed 400 years ago “is a custom more honor’d in the breach than the observance,” we should remember the whole point of Christmas is the birth of a child.

John and Andy Schlafly are sons of Phyllis Schlafly (1924-2016) whose 27th book, The Conservative Case for Trump, was published posthumously on September 6.