

## **Healthcare Worker Sues Department of Veterans Affairs Urging Court to Block Enforcement of Abortion Rule at Texas Facility**

*Texas nurse practitioner could be forced to violate religious conscience, state law prohibiting abortion if rule allowing abortion at VA facility upheld*

---

**Washington, DC**—First Liberty Institute filed a federal lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (“VA”) on behalf of Stephanie Carter, a nurse practitioner at the Olin E. Teague Veterans’ Center in Temple, Texas, challenging the VA’s failure to comply with federal law.

You can read the complaint [here](#).

“It is unconscionable that the Biden administration would force health care workers at VA facilities to violate their consciences,” said Danielle Runyan, Senior Counsel for First Liberty Institute. “The VA should be focused on caring for the men and women who bravely served to protect our country, not on performing illegal abortions. The new VA Rule disregards longstanding federal law that prohibits VA clinics from performing abortions and fails to account for the sincerely held religious beliefs of medical providers who are impacted by the Rule.”

Runyan added, “The VA’s enforcement of the Rule at the Temple, Texas facility also subjects Ms. Carter to potential criminal and civil liability under Texas State law.”

Shortly after the U.S. Supreme Court issued its opinion in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, the VA introduced a new interim final rule titled “Reproductive Health Services,” immediately allowing elective abortions at VA medical facilities. However, Congress prohibits abortions at VA clinics in Section 106(a) of the Veterans Health Care Act, which provides that “the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may provide to women . . . [g]eneral reproductive health care . . . but not including under this section . . . abortions.”

Ms. Carter has faithfully served our Nation’s veterans as a VA employee for 23 years. When she sought a religious accommodation from participating in abortions, VA officials informed Ms. Carter that no process for such accommodations exists.

The complaint states, “This is an action under the United States Constitution and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, brought to enjoin the application of the Rule to Ms. Carter and enforcement of the Rule at the Temple VA facility. The Rule’s application to Ms. Carter and enforcement at the Temple VA facility has deprived and continues to deprive Ms. Carter of her paramount rights and guarantees under the United States Constitution and RFRA.”

First Liberty attorneys filed the lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas.

**About First Liberty Institute**

[First Liberty Institute](#) is a non-profit public interest law firm and the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious freedom for all Americans.

To arrange an interview, contact Peyton Luke at [media@firstliberty.org](mailto:media@firstliberty.org) or by calling 972-941-4453.