

# Judge rejects Christians' health care suit

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(RNS) A federal judge on Tuesday (Feb. 22) dismissed a lawsuit filed by Christians who argue that President Obama's health care overhaul violates their religious freedom.

The Christians said they believe that God will heal them from disease and that the requirement to purchase health insurance in the new Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act forces them to demonstrate a lack of faith. The lawsuit argued the health care law also violates the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

But, U.S. District Judge Gladys Kessler said, "It is unclear how (the new health care law) puts substantial pressure on plaintiffs to modify their behavior and to violate their beliefs, as it permits them to pay a shared responsibility payment in lieu of actually obtaining health insurance."

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act allows Americans to a pay a fine if they choose not to buy insurance, an option which all of the plaintiffs have said they will take.

The five plaintiffs of the suit were: Margaret Peggy Lee Mead of Hillsborough, N.C.; Charles Edward Lee and Kenneth Ruffo of San Antonio; Susan Seven-Sky of West Harrison, N.Y.; and Gina Rodriguez of Plano, Texas.

Mead v. Holder is one of several lawsuits that have challenged various portions of the new health care law. The Supreme Court will likely have final say on the law, Kessler wrote.