

Forty-eight senators voted for this?

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

March 1, 2012

So, the Blunt amendment got killed in the Senate. And good riddance: you wouldn't know it from [the L.A. Times's writeup](#), but the measure was a [good bit broader](#) than a reversal of the Obama administration's contraception mandate (which itself would have been [nothing to celebrate](#)). From the [amendment text](#) (pdf):

A health plan shall not be considered to have failed to provide the essential health benefits package...on the basis that it declines to provide coverage of specific items or services because...providing coverage (or, in the case of a sponsor of a group health plan, paying for coverage) of such specific items or services is contrary to the religious beliefs or moral convictions of the sponsor, issuer, or other entity offering the plan.

In other words, essentially a line-item veto of whatever the boss is morally opposed to, based on church teaching or otherwise. So while there may be some fair distinctions to be drawn between the Catholic bishops' views on contraception and Adam Lee's [nightmare scenarios](#) of employers otherwise exercising their religious freedom, under the Blunt amendment Lee's hypotheticals wouldn't have been all that far-fetched. Here's one of them:

I'm a business owner who believes, for religious reasons, that sex outside marriage is a sin. Can I insist on my employees having a health insurance plan that doesn't pay for prenatal care unless the woman is married? If I also believe that divorce is a sin, can I insist on a plan that doesn't pay for prenatal care if the woman is divorced and remarried?

Read [the rest](#). The amendment failed--but only by a few votes. Can't imagine many of the "no" voters were thrilled to see this particular vote come up (in an election year!).