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## Ambassador Ray Flynn Statement on Religious Freedom HHS Mandate Driving Wedge Between Catholics and Democratic Party

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BOSTON, June 8, 2012 -- Ambassador Raymond L. Flynn expressed concern about the HHS mandate driving a wedge between Catholics and the Democratic Party as he addressed a Stand Up for Religious Freedom rally at the Boston Commons today.

“As a proud lifelong Catholic Democrat, I fear that this dangerous policy is causing a serious rift between the Democratic Party and Catholics – and people of all faiths for that matter. Sadly, this unthinkable move threatens a long and proud relationship.”

In the days of Roosevelt, “It was unthinkable for most Catholics not to vote the straight Democratic ticket.” The era continued through the 50s and 70s.

“We all knew of the close personal friendship that the Kennedy family had with our neighbor Richard Cardinal Cushing and so many other Church leaders. [I]t was both the Church and the Democratic Party who were always there to help. They were working for better and safer work conditions on the docks, medical care, educating kids and helping the poor. People in those days were loyal to the Church and the Democratic Party.”

“You can't imagine how I felt when I saw my longtime friend Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York City filing a legal challenge against the Obama Administration for their discriminatory policies against religious institutions in America. I am proud of Cardinal Dolan, but ashamed that this administration has let it come to this.”

“It is outrageous that the administration has taken action to trample on the rights of religious institutions and people of faith. Despite what you hear from the media and some politicians, this is not about access to contraception; it is about the principle of whether the federal government can force religious organizations to take actions that violate their own faith and their own conscience. Catholics will not stand by and be silent!”

“Our fellow Americans of various faiths have also recognized the danger of this mandate and have begun to speak out. [W]e need more voices to stand with Cardinal Dolan and the principles of religious freedom. Starting now, our politicians must learn that they cannot ignore what Catholics think or believe in. Our voices will be heard! It's time for our elected officials to speak out against this devastating attack on our tradition of religious freedom.”

*Raymond L. Flynn is an Adviser to Catholics for the Common Good, and is the former Mayor of Boston and U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican. Catholics for the Common Good is a Catholic apostolate working for a more just society.*