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## Bishops losing on birth control as religious liberty issue

by Tom Gallagher

NCR Today

The Republican-friendly U.S. bishops and their conference staff seem to have lost control of their so-called religious freedom argument: The current conflict with the Obama administration over the HHS contraception mandate is being perceived as a birth control and anti-women story, according to a new Bloomberg national poll.

From Bloomberg News:

Americans overwhelmingly regard the debate over President Barack Obama's policy on employer-provided contraceptive coverage as a matter of women's health, not religious freedom, rejecting Republicans' rationale for opposing the rule. More than three-quarters say the topic shouldn't even be a part of the U.S. political debate.

More than six in 10 respondents to a Bloomberg National Poll -- including almost 70 percent of women -- say the issue involves health care and access to birth control, according to the survey taken March 8-11.

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