

## **Statement of U.S. Rep Dan Lungren (CA-3)**

"Simple justice compels us to respect the conscience of health care providers.

"The right to freedom of thought or conscience was recognized by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Benjamin Cardozo, who wrote in *Palko v. Connecticut*, "Freedom of thought is the matrix, the indispensable condition, of nearly every other form of freedom." Integral to the freedom of thought is the right to act - or refrain from acting - on the basis of one's deeply held beliefs.

"Freedom of conscience is recognized as a fundamental component of human rights law worldwide. Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that, "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

"Health care professionals should not be forced to abandon their deeply held moral commitments and personal beliefs. The very notion of freedom of choice requires no less."