

June 2022

Attorney General Merrick Garland
Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights Kristen Clarke
US Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Garland and Assistant Attorney General Clarke:

We, the undersigned representing millions of Americans, are writing to voice our concerns over the increased attacks against churches, pregnancy resource centers and pro-life organizations in the aftermath of the leaked draft opinion in the Supreme Court case *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*.

In December of last year, the Department of Justice was asked how it was investigating the repeated attacks on churches in the United States. The Attorney General was also asked to investigate those complaints and take appropriate action as is your duty. Since that request there has been public silence.

Since the May 3 leak of the draft opinion in *Dobbs*, those attacks have intensified. Two pro-life organizations in Madison, Wisconsin and Keizer, Oregon have been firebombed as well as a pregnancy care center in Buffalo, New York. Seventeen churches or pro-life organizations have been vandalized with pro-abortion or anti-religious slogans. Among those, a tiny Black Baptist church in rural Mississippi was spray-painted with depictions of rape, and four churches in Olympia, Washington were vandalized on the same day with phrases like "abort the church." A recurring slogan has been: "If abortions aren't safe, then neither are you."

The relative silence from the Administration endangers Americans even more. One extremist group is advocating for violence in response to the final Supreme Court decision on *Dobbs*, while another group has published home addresses, and encouraged people to show up at Supreme Court Justices' homes, churches, and their children's schools in an attempt to coerce the Justices and influence their final decision. Last week, there was an attempted assassination of a sitting Supreme Court Justice at his home.

Since May 2020 [over 130 incidents](#) have occurred across 29 states and the District of Columbia at Catholic properties alone. Incidents include arson, statues beheaded, limbs cut, smashed, and painted, gravestones defaced with swastikas and anti-Catholic language and American flags next to them burned, and other destruction and vandalism. A number of these incidents appeared to express hostility toward the Catholic Church because of its beliefs on the sanctity of life in the womb.

Under 18 U.S. Code § 247 it is the duty of the Attorney General to investigate and prosecute, when necessary for substantial justice, those who do damage to religious property or participate in the obstruction of persons in the free exercise of religious beliefs. We appreciate that the Federal Bureau of Investigation has been assisting at least one affected religious organization on this matter, and we understand through media reports that the FBI is at least investigating the firebombing in Madison. However, the severity of the situation calls for your leadership. This continued assault on religious and pro-life groups because of their beliefs is a manifest injustice that requires prompt, comprehensive, and public response.

We call on you to publicly condemn these unlawful attacks; to commit to vigorous efforts to prevent them, and to investigate and prosecute them; and to proactively engage with the affected faith communities to ensure their concerns and security needs are being met. We would request a meeting with

your office as well as the Civil Rights Division to discuss what plans are in the likelihood these attacks will intensify.

Religious liberty is a foundational principle of enduring importance in America, enshrined in our Constitution and other sources of federal law. It is a precondition of a flourishing civil society where citizens of shared beliefs or convictions freely come together to meet their communities' needs, as through the efforts of pregnancy help centers to support expecting moms. And it has no more basic embodiment than the right to worship free from fear.

Sincerely,

Brian Burch, President
CatholicVote

Ambassador Ken Blackwell
Former U. S. Representative
United Nations Human Rights Commission

Greg Schleppenbach
Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, U.S.
Conference of Catholic Bishops

Morton Blackwell, President
Leadership Institute

Ryan Anderson, President
Ethics and Public Policy Center

Jeanne Mancini, President
March for Life Education & Defense Fund

Kristan Hawkins, President
Students for Life Action

Kevin Roberts, President
The Heritage Foundation

Jessica Anderson, Executive Director
Heritage Action for America

Penny Nance, President
Concerned Women for America

David Bozell, President
ForAmerica

Tony Perkins, President
Family Research Council

Jordan Sekulow, President & CEO
ACLJ Action

Marjorie Dannenfelser, President
SBA Pro-Life America

Dr, Ben Carson, Founder and Chairman
American Cornerstone Institute

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Center for Urban Renewal and Education
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