



Focus on Religious Freedom

*“The Bible clearly says that faithfulness and persecution often go hand in hand.”
-Evangelist Billy Graham*

Legalized Religious Persecution Comes to America

On Sept. 23, 2022, Catholic pro-life activist, Mark Houck, was arrested by a fully armed team of FBI agents at his home in PA in front of his wife and seven young children after the agents had pounded on the door in the early morning. "They said they were going to break in if he didn't open it. And then they had about 5 guns pointed at my husband, myself, and basically at my kids," said Mrs. Houck. ⁽¹⁾

Houck is accused of assaulting a male Planned Parenthood client escort outside a Philadelphia abortion clinic on Oct. 23, 2021, under the *Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act*. Houck regularly prays the Rosary, hands out literature, and does some "sidewalk counseling" outside the clinic. On this day, when "the escort began harassing Mark's 12-year-old son, they walked down the street away from the building entrance. The escort followed them and when he continued yelling at the boy, getting within his personal space, Mark pushed him away," wrote a spokesperson. ⁽²⁾ The man fell down but was not seriously hurt, requiring only "a Band-Aid on his finger," said the spokesperson. ⁽³⁾ After local authorities declined to press charges, the escort pressed charges in Philadelphia municipal court, but the case was dismissed when the man repeatedly failed to show up for court dates.

If convicted, Houck could face 11 years in prison. "This case is being brought solely to intimidate people of faith and pro-life Americans," said Peter Breen, Thomas More Society senior counselor. "Mark Houck is innocent of these lawless charges and we intend to prove that in court." ⁽⁴⁾

In the meantime, "Nobody responsible for the nearly 100 attacks, including firebombs and vandalism, on pro-life pregnancy centers has been charged by the Department of Justice (DOJ), wrote Greg Price of xStrategies. ⁽⁵⁾ These frequent attacks, many by pro-abortion group "Jane's Revenge", were seemingly ignored after the Supreme Court decision in June on *Roe v Wade*.

"This kind of overreaction for a minor infraction of the law is deeply troubling and it becomes even more troubling when paired with the under reaction by the DOJ when the pro-life side is targeted," wrote William Donohue, Catholic League president. ⁽⁶⁾

Berkeley develops "Jewish-free Zones"

Nine student groups at U.C. Berkeley created "Jewish-free Zones" when they adopted a rule forbidding pro-Israel speakers at school events. The controversial bylaw, promulgated by a pro-Palestinian group on campus, says it aims to stop the spread of Zionist (pro-Israel) beliefs.

"It is troubling to broadly exclude a particular viewpoint from being expressed," said Dean Erwin Chemerinsky, who is Jewish. "This would mean that I could not be invited to speak because I support the existence of Israel, though I condemn many of their policies." ⁽⁷⁾

(christianpost.com, 9/27/22(1)(2); catholicnewsagency.com, 9/27/22(3)(4)(6); 1cbn.com, 9/27/22(5); ncregister.com, 9/27/22; nypost.com, 9/29/22); nypost.com, 9/30/22(7); newsweek.com, 10/2/22